

INDIAN FRONTIER POLICY
AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY

GENERAL SIR JOHN ADYE, G.C.B., R.A.



George Noble Taylor

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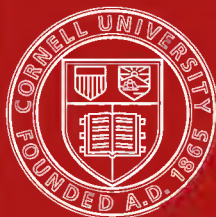
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AUTHORISED EDITION.

HOME AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY

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SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT, M.P.,

AT DUNDEE AND KIRKCALDY,

ON NOVEMBER 23th and 26th, 1897.

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HOME AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

I.—DUNDEE—NOVEMBER 25TH.

(Speech after SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT had been presented with the Freedom of the City in recognition of his eminence as a Statesman and a Scholar.)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said:—My Lord Provost and fellow-burgesses of Dundee,—Public life has many troubles—I speak of it as one who knows—but it has also its compensations, and this is one of them. That compensation arises, as you, my Lord Provost, have properly pointed out, from the fair and generous disposition of the English people to recognise good intentions, however poor may be the performance. The language, my Lord Provost, which you have employed is the natural exaggeration of one who is called upon to justify the duty he is about to perform, and I have no doubt in the terms of over-indulgence with which you have spoken you have also felt that generosity which belongs to one who is not of the same political party as myself. Now, sir, I have found that our people, whether they live north or south of the Tweed, are always willing to give credit to men who have endeavoured, according to their lights and according to their ability, to serve their country—to treat them with a consideration beyond that which they deserve. There are some old lines, well known, which I would apply to this subject. They are always willing to

Be to their faults a little blind,
And to their virtues very kind,

and I must alter the last line and say—

• And give some freedom to their mind.

You have long in Scotland had a privilege which in England till very lately belonged, I think, only to the City of London—of doing honour to such of our countrymen as you may think deserving of such distinction. The municipalities of England have only very recently acquired that right. You have had it I know not how long; I have seen records belonging to some centuries ago of those upon whom the honour of the freedom of Dundee has been conferred. There is something in local patriotism. Men are proud of the place of their birth, of the surroundings and circumstances of the localities with which they are connected; and there is something inspiring, something which elevates the mind in the association with great events, with great names, and with illustrious men. That is the value of such records as the roll-

call of the City of Dundee. Dundee has the right among the cities of Great Britain to give honour where it thinks honour is due. Perhaps, amidst that extraordinary development of the prosperity of this country, there is no more signal instance than the growth of Dundee. I find that during the present century the population of this town has increased sevenfold. I find also that in advancement in wealth and in enterprise it is behind no other place in the United Kingdom. There is a proof of the intelligence, of the vigour, and of the perseverance of the population of this great city. I have received from the Town Clerk some of the names with whom mine is to have the honour of being enrolled—great names in the history of this country, such as those of Lord Grey, of Henry Brougham, and of Richard Cobden. These are all men who have rendered great service to their country—some of them men to whom the nation, the people at large, owe the voice that they have in the government of their own affairs; others to whom is owing the prosperity of the trade of this country.

Lord John Russell.

There is one name which caught my eye, upon which I dwelt with especial pleasure, on account of my personal connection with that period. I find that in the year 1863 Lord John Russell—I call him by the name by which he will be for ever known—was made a citizen—a burgess of Dundee. It so happened that in that very year, and at that very time, I had the honour of being in the company of Lord John Russell—not in Dundee, but in the neighbourhood in Scotland. That is now thirty-four years ago. But it seems to me as if it were only yesterday when he did me the honour of asking me to accompany him to the Trossachs. That was a very interesting excursion. Excuse me if I dwell for a moment on the memory of those days. We went to that beautiful scene. I remember the Scotch boatman—a shrewd man—they are shrewd men—and as Lord John got out of the boat I said, “Do you know who that is?” He said, “No, I dinna ken,” and I said, “That is Lord John Russell.” He replied, “Is it Lord John Russell? Why, he is a man of terrible judgment.” And so he was, a man of terrible judgment. If I may tell another anecdote. When we went there—it was a piece of criticism which, I think, is worth recalling—Lord John had asked me to read to them the beautiful description by Walter Scott of that exquisite scene, and when I came to the lines:—

Foxglove and nightshade side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride—

with the hypercritical impertinence of a young man I said, “Lord John, that is very fine, but what does it mean?”—a question you ought never to put either to a poet or an orator—and Lord John, with reminiscences of his earlier days, replied, “That is just the question that Lord Holland put to Scott, and Scott said, ‘The critics have made so much nonsense of my sense that I will now leave them to make sense of my nonsense.’” I commended that admirable maxim to the imitation

of all critics, not only of poems, but of speeches as well. The character of Lord Russell will always remain, I believe, among his fellow-burgesses of Dundee as an admirable example of public and of private life. His private companionship was delightful from his literary gifts, from his varied memory, and the participation he had had in the society of great men and of great deeds. You, Lord Provost, have spoken of the various fortunes of political men. There was no man whose fortune was more varied than Lord John Russell. He started in life with great ideals and great objects, and lived to realise most of them. He was sometimes at the top of the flood of political success; at other times, when the waters had ebbed, he was stranded upon the beach. Well, that happens to much smaller men. I am speaking morally and intellectually, not physically. But if you want to see a true appreciation of the character of a public man, like Lord Russell, in adverse fortune you will find it portrayed by his great antagonist, Mr. Disraeli, in the earlier chapters of the life of Lord George Bentinck,—drawn, I fancy, a good deal from the writer's own experience in the days of his earlier leadership. There you will find the picture of a man who is not daunted by adversity, who, with pluck, with determination, and with courage, goes forward either to lose or win a battle. That is a literary masterpiece which is well worthy of the study of any man in public life. It is a stimulus to exertion, and an encouragement in distress. Forgive me for these allusions; they bring me back to the point at which I began. The real value of distinctions like this is to make men feel that, however little one may deserve it, one has been associated by one's fellow-citizens with men who have won such a place in the esteem of their countrymen as those of whom I have spoken. To have lived with such men is in itself a liberal education, and to be named in the same *libro d'oro*—in the records of Dundee—is an honour at which I feel flattered, and which at the same time I feel that I hardly deserved.

Question of Trade.

Before I sit down, as a burghess of Dundee, and as the youngest burghess, I ought to perform a part of those duties which belong to a burghess of Dundee. I imagine one of the duties of a burghess of Dundee in this great commercial community is to give careful and deliberate attention to the questions of trade in this the greatest commercial country in the world. I have no pretensions to lecture such an audience as this upon questions which they understand as well or better than myself. At the same time, having been responsible in former days for the finances of this country, which depend upon its commercial prosperity, I have always felt it my duty, as it is my interest, to regard everything that concerns the trade of this country as one of the most vital questions to which a public man's regard can be directed. You have heard a great deal about the disastrous condition of the trade of this country. That is not true. If you look at the body of the trade of this country it remains, as it has always been, the greatest trade of the world. It is perfectly true.

that Great Britain no longer retains that absolute monopoly which in the earlier part of the century, from its command of iron and coal, it could once appropriate to itself. In the advance of nations we cannot be surprised that others have advanced and have become competitors with us. In other nations, in markets which we thought had belonged alone to ourselves, we find competitors for the trade that we carry on. But this is only natural and belongs to the progress of the world, and I entirely deny and wholly disbelieve that in that competition the British have been, or will be, beaten. That same energy, that same intelligence which has given them the lead in the commerce of the world will always belong to them. It is perfectly true that the export trade has suffered—and I do not believe in a community like this the heresy is held that by diminishing your imports you will increase your exports—that is to say by depriving other nations of the means to buy your goods you will create for them a better market. That is not so. But there are weak points, no doubt, in our competition with other countries which are well deserving of attention. Now, I hear it said sometimes that all we want is more education for the working classes. We want technical education. Well, I do not disparage technical education. No doubt we want higher education in all classes of the community; but I believe it is an entire mistake to affirm that any falling off in British trade is due to any inferiority either in the manufacturers or the artisans of this country. At this time it is admitted that all the best goods are made in the United Kingdom. There is no dispute, I believe, upon that point. If you take all the higher trades requiring skill and knowledge for their development, such as the engineering trades and the great textile trades, there is not a country in the world that can produce or does produce a better class of article than is produced in the United Kingdom.

Consult the Customer.

Well, that shows, then, that it is not in the manufacture of the goods, it is not in the artisan, it is not in the manufacturer as a manufacturer that the weak point is found. I have studied, and do study constantly with great care the reports—the very valuable reports—made by the British Consuls in every part of the world of the condition year by year of British trade; and where British trade has fallen off, and where other competitors have come in, it has not been from the inferiority of British goods. It is because the goods are not always what the customer wants. This is the weak point in the case. After all it is not for us to say what people are to buy. It is for the people who buy to say what they want, and that is the whole secret, in my belief, of all the difficulties that have arisen with regard to British trade. We have a maxim, a very good maxim, of government in these modern times, and that is that you are to govern the people not as you think best for them, but as they think best for themselves. That is equally true with regard to your trade. What is it that we find in all these reports?

The Art of Solicitation.

We find that some other countries—especially Germany—cultivate what I may be allowed to call the arts of solicitation in a manner that the British manufacturer has not yet acquired. There is a very valuable volume just published—a Parliamentary paper—giving an account of the system of education which the Germans have adopted with the special object of educating their commercial classes to enable them to get at the foreign customer. Pains are taken there to teach the languages of foreign countries, especially English and French. It has become part—and the most important part—of their education to make their people masters in these tongues. That, it seems to me, is the one weak spot—and the only weak spot in our system. You have got the goods—you manufacture the best goods that can be made—but there is not sufficient means of ascertaining what are precisely the commodities that these foreign countries require. You will hear it said—“Oh, it is the foreign tariffs that shut you out.” But it is not only the foreign tariffs which shut you out, because Germany has to encounter hostile tariffs in those countries to which it finds successful access. It is not, then, the foreign tariff. It is, I believe, that the manufacturer has not cultivated to the same extent as some other countries the art of getting at the customer for the sale of his products. I have seen in many of these reports that in some countries you may find the commercial agents of other nations counted by hundreds while the English agents are not counted by tens, or even by smaller numbers. I read from these Consuls that they receive catalogues to be distributed. But catalogues are no good—nobody reads them in distant lands. Catalogues are wasted. But what is done by Germany and by other countries is to send intelligent men, who are familiar with the language of the foreign customer, to push the trade, and that is the way in which they have advanced—though not advanced to anything like the high level of the British trade.

The Secret of the Pushing of Trade.

Do not be deceived by calculations which deal with percentages, because when a man has got £10 and gets £20, why that is 100 per cent.; but when a man has got £1,000, and gets £500, that is only 50 per cent. That will show how deceptive these mere percentages are. If I may be allowed, as a burgess of Dundee, to make a suggestion to the commercial interest, it is this, that we ought to cultivate the art of getting at the customer, of learning what he wants, of making exactly what he wants, and not saying to him:—“Here are the goods; take them or leave them—they are excellent goods.” They may be excellent, but they may not be exactly what he wants, and he goes elsewhere. In order to get at the customers to know their minds, you must have agents who are familiar with their languages, and from the spread of the English language all over the world, we are much too indifferent to the necessity for learning the language of other people, and I say that the present defect of English education, from the top of the scale to the bottom, is its neglect of the cultivation of the modern

languages of the nations of the world. Depend upon it that is the secret of the pushing of trade. There is before us, I hope, in a very short time, a great improvement in the secondary education of this country, and I do hope, following the example of Germany in this respect, we shall make our secondary education—the education, above all, of the commercial classes—such as may provide them with the means of meeting the competition of other countries, and make a cardinal feature of that education the acquisition of the modern languages of the countries with which we deal. That is a suggestion which I venture to throw out, as I wish public attention should be concentrated upon it. And now, ladies and gentlemen, having detained you very much longer than I proposed, I have only very gratefully to thank the authorities of this great city and the people by whom they are elected for the honour they have conferred upon me to-day, which is enshrined in this beautiful casket—an exquisite work of art—which I shall possess for a short time, and which my son—who is by my side—will inherit from me as a lasting treasure.

II.—DUNDEE—NOVEMBER 25TH.

(Speech at Liberal Demonstration at night.)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said:—Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Citizens of Dundee,—I wish I could really believe myself worthy of the welcome you have given me to-night. These are the real rewards which a man, after a great many years spent in the public service, looks for at the hands of his countrymen. The chairman has well said that I find myself in the presence of friends to-night—and in the heart of a friendly country. I am glad to stand to-night on the same platform with two of the most faithful members of the Liberal party—the members for Dundee, my friends Sir John Leng and Mr. Robertson. He has well said that there are no two men in the House of Commons upon whom those who are responsible for the Liberal party can more surely depend. Well, gentlemen, we are gathered together not I believe from Dundee alone, but from many parts of Scotland, at the close of a memorable year, a year in which we have been celebrating the great and noble reign of Queen Victoria. Amidst the most distinctive characteristics of that celebration was the presence of the representatives of the dominions of the Queen from beyond the seas. Those children cannot say we did not give them a good welcome, that we did not treat them well. According to my domestic experience in these days, the children do have the best of it. We almost forgot the mother-country in the presence of this numerous and flourishing family, but the extraordinary thing is that at this time there are people who come forward and say that they and they alone are the legitimate parents of this noble offspring.

Liberals and Colonial Policy.

To hear some people talk one would suppose that there was a Unionist Columbus who had discovered the British Empire, and who had sailed in a Mayflower of his own and founded the British Colonies. Gentlemen, the Colonial Empire of England—(*cries of "Britain"*) Britain—yes—I made that mistake once before—I shall not do it again—I shall call it Greater Britain. The greatness of that Empire is due to the gift of self-government, a grant, free, generous, unrestricted. That was the work of Liberal statesmen. It commenced from the first year of the reign of the Queen—in Canada. What lot or part or share had the Tory party in that great and patriotic work? You shall judge. In the year 1872 Lord Beaconsfield was occupied in an elaborate demonstration of the principles of the Tory party at home and abroad. He made a remarkable speech at the Crystal Palace in 1872, and there he expounded the Tory doctrine of Colonial policy. I will read you what he said. He said: "If you look at the history of this country since the advent of Liberalism forty years ago you will find that there has been no effort so continuous, so subtle, as the attempts of Liberalism to effect the disintegration of the Empire." Well, we are familiar with that language. We hear it to-day and every day. This is the charge of Separatism. This charge was renewed the other day at Glasgow, and this is what Mr. Chamberlain said: "The Liberal party are opposed to the growth of the Empire; they would if they could revert to what I think is an entirely wrongful policy of 30 years ago, when we did all we could, or our predecessors did all they could, to drive our colonies from us, and to make a little Kingdom of the Empire we regard with legitimate pride." That is what "we" did. Well, when the Colonial Secretary uses the word "we," it is difficult to understand exactly who it was. Is it the "we" of to-day—or is it the "we" of a few years ago?—because without some explanation of that, it is not easy to understand it. But now, I told you I would remind you of what the Tory policy was with reference to the Colonies, and Lord Beaconsfield said on the occasion to which I have referred that "that result" (the disintegration of the Empire) "was nearly accomplished when those subtle views were adopted by the country under the plausible plea of"—what?—"of granting self-government to the Colonies."

A Tory Idea of Self-Government.

That was the manner in which, according to Lord Beaconsfield, we disintegrated the Empire, and he says, "So subtle were the proceedings of the Liberal party in that direction that he thought the tie had been broken." Now, what was his view of what ought to have been the self-government of the Colonies? He says, "If you gave self-government, when conceded it ought to have been accompanied first by an Imperial tariff." Well, that is the thing we have heard of under the name of a Zollverein. We were to impose upon the Colonies their tariff. Secondly, there were to be securities for the people of England—he did not say Britain—"securities for the people

of England for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belonged to their sovereign as trustee." The Colonies were not to have their own lands; they were to be appropriated, "not to the Colonist, but for the enjoyment of the people of England." That was the second point. Then there was to be "a military code which would have precisely defined the responsibility by which the Colonies should be defended." That was the Tory theory of self-government. They were to be denied control of their own tariff, disposal of their own land, and they were to be subjected to a military code made in this country. I wonder what Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when he was here the other day, would have said of such a plan of self-government as that. No, if the Colonies to-day are self-reliant, if they are contented, if they are loyal, it is because they received the priceless boon of self-government from the Liberals, and when you hear that same charge brought against the Liberal party to-day, bear in mind that it was the Liberal party, by their conception of self-government, by their foresight, and by their wisdom, who created the prosperity, the liberty, and the loyalty of our Colonial Empire.

The Permanence of Liberal Principles.

I have referred to this matter because I think it is right that it should be put upon its proper foundation. So much for the charge that it is the Liberal party that has sought by its Colonial policy to disintegrate the Empire. There is another challenge that has been offered to us. We are asked what and which of the principles we have proclaimed we have now abandoned. Now if, after the manner of Scotland, I was to answer that question by putting another, I should like to ask my cross-examiner, "Which of the principles which you have professed do you adhere to?" For myself, and I believe for you, I have no difficulty in answering the question that is put to us, which of the principles you have professed do you abandon? I can answer it in a single word,—Nothing. We are not deserters from the camp; we have not gone over to the enemy; we have not abjured the Liberal faith, and we don't apologise for having joined the Tories. Do we believe that the principles we professed before are less true than before? If not, why should we abandon them? When we experienced the irreparable loss in our great and illustrious leader, Mr. Gladstone, what was the first thing we did when we called the representatives of the Liberal party together at the Foreign Office? The first declaration we made was that nothing was changed except the loss of so great a leader.

Points of Liberal Policy.

Well, have we who have made the great gift of self-government to the Colonies, and who have seen the happy results of that trust, not in the niggard spirit which Lord Beaconsfield sketched, but in confidence in the people of those colonies, have we any cause to despair of self-government for Ireland? Why, so necessary is it, that even the present Government are going to try their hand at a sort of

semi-Home Rule. They are going to send up a pilot balloon that they think will satisfy everybody. For myself I do not feel altogether quite sure about that. Take the temperance question. The Government are so deeply impressed with the curse of drunkenness in this country that they have appointed a Commission to get somebody else to tell them what to do. Well I wish all success to the Commission, and all success to any Government which finds a satisfactory solution of that question. They have rejected our measure—what is theirs? For my own part I ask, why should we abandon a belief in the democratic principle that, in some form or other, the cure of this, as of all other social evils, ought to be found in the voice of the people? It is nearly half a century ago since Scotland led the van in temperance reform, and I do not believe that she is weary in well doing. Disestablishment—it was in Scotland that the Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Hartington, in the name of the Liberal party, made a memorable declaration that in his opinion the question of Disestablishment ought to be determined by the opinion of the majority of the Scotch people. I have never heard that he has withdrawn from that declaration, and since when, I ask, has the Liberal party become ashamed of the doctrine which is its vital breath—civil and religious equality before the law, and the denial of the right of any special creed to preference by the State, which is the trustee of all its citizens alike? Electoral reform—one man one vote. Is that abandoned? Shorter Parliaments, the prevention of the disfranchisement of the working man by change of residence and stale registers. Is that all gone? In education, is popular control in schools which are subsidised out of public money—is that thrown overboard? Land reform: the fair taxation of land values and ground-rents: to the farmer more security for his holding—these are questions which closely concern the interests of an agricultural country, and in taxation greatly affecting the fairness of the burdens cast upon the towns. There are many other questions which I cannot deal with to-night, but do not suppose because I do not mention them that I have forgotten them. There is one more question to-day upon which I might have desired and felt bound to say some words to you, and that is the question of Labour. But I read yesterday an appeal made by Mr. Ritchie to everybody who spoke upon this subject, to say nothing which at this critical moment of the conference which is now going on might interfere in any way with a speedy and successful issue of that conference. You will understand that it is for that reason that I say nothing about it to-day.

The House of Lords.

But there is one question which over-rides and governs the whole, and that is the question of the House of Lords. I shall not attempt to-night to describe the character of that evil and the necessity of that reform in any words of my own. They might be thought too strong—not for you, but we must have consideration for the weak-kneed brethren. I will therefore give it you in the moderate accents of the Liberal Unionist party. I will take the leading and active spirit, and

this is what Mr. Chamberlain has said upon this subject. Speaking of the House of Lords he said, "It has protected every abuse and sheltered every privilege; it has denied justice and delayed reform; it is irresponsible without independence, obstinate without courage, arbitrary without judgment, and arrogant without knowledge." Well, I cannot attempt to rival the accuracy of that description, and the conclusion he draws is this, "Their claim to dictate the laws which we shall make, the way in which we shall govern ourselves, to spoil, delay, even reject, measures demanded by the popular voice, passed after due discussion by the majority of the people's House, is a claim contrary to reason, opposed to justice, and which we will resist to the death." All I can say is, "Amen." Well, then, here is Mr. Goschen. He says of the House of Lords that "They are a permanent Conservative or high Tory Committee," and my noble and learned friend, Lord James of Hereford, says they are "an additional wing of the Carlton Club." Now, that is what he said a few years ago. But since he has himself migrated to that august institution, he has made a speech—it was only the other day—in which he said that the House of Lords was a truly democratic assembly, and I suppose that in his regenerate condition he has discovered that the Carlton Club is really the Temple of Democracy. Well, these are the High Priests of Unionism. But here is the acolyte. Mr. Jesse Collings says "There were some institutions not worth mending. He was no reformer of the House of Lords. He demanded its total abolition as a legislative assembly." Now, that is the Liberal Unionist creed on the subject of the House of Lords. They ask us which of our principles have we abandoned. Do they adhere to their own? No, gentlemen, we hold, and will continue to hold, that it is intolerable, that it is dangerous, that the House of Lords should possess and exercise the power to delay, to neutralise, to mutilate, to reject legislation decreed by the representatives of the people. By that we stand, and by that we shall stand, until this wrong is redressed. No reform of the House of Lords is worth discussion which will in effect give it greater power to over-rule the House of Commons. That is a position we do not, and which we will not accept. Our resolution is fixed, and we will never rest until the fiat of the representatives of the people is supreme in the Legislature of the nation.

Who has been Consistent?

It is of us that Mr. Chamberlain says, "There is not any single principle or cause which belonged to the Liberal party before 1885 to which those gentlemen now give adhesion." What I read to you was before 1885—and who gives adhesion to it now? Well, there is one other challenge which I am prepared to meet. They say we shirk. We do not shirk. We meet their challenges, and we are giving them the answer which we believe to be sufficient. It is said we have aimed at too much. Well, I am not ashamed of that. It is a great deal better than aiming at too little. The performances of the best men seldom equal their hopes and expectations. But we have not run away. We have not gone over to the enemy. We have not disavowed

our principles or abjured our faith. Defeat is not dishonour. To brave men it is not even discouragement. You are not to judge a great party by the accidents of to-day, or by the fortune of a single election. You must view its conduct, if you are to judge it aright, over a long tract of time. In one sense, the Liberal party has always aimed at too much, if you mean that it aimed at more than it could immediately accomplish. It is much easier for men to live from hand to mouth by carrying—when they cannot help it—bad copies of measures which for years they have resisted. But take back your memory to the earlier part of this century. Were the Liberals never defeated then? Why, they were never anything else. They were in what would be called to-day a perpetual condition of hopeless minority. But that minority was not hopeless. They never turned tail. What answer would have been given, do you think, by Fox, or Grey, or Russell, if they were told that in consequence of the last election they ought to throw up the sponge? How often, and how long, was the cause of the Catholics defeated—the emancipation of the slaves, the enfranchisement of the people? Was the first Reform Bill the work of a day? Were the rights of Nonconformists not battled for for generations—the claims of the Jews, the reform of corporations, and Free Trade?

“Margarine Liberalism.”

Well, Sir, these were regarded as hopeless causes. They were defeated over and over again; the scoffing Tories, aye, and the weak-kneed Liberals proclaimed they were lost causes. But the Liberal party has no lost causes. They are never finally defeated. Contending against powerful and selfish interests, against ignorance, passion, and prejudice, these things may prevail for a day, but in the long run justice and right, supported by patience and by courage, will always, as it always has done, win the day. Sometimes the measures are carried by their legitimate authors. Not seldom, after years of inveterate opposition, they are adopted as the price of political existence by their natural enemies. I confess this process raises in my breast no sentiment of jealousy. There is a flavour of irony about it which is not disagreeable. We quarter on the enemy—always a good form of campaign. So long as we get what we want for the country, we do not reject the penitents. Let us take care that we get the genuine article. When the shopman deserts the old firm and sets up in business for himself, take care you scrutinise the goods supplied. Take care you do not get margarine Liberalism. Look at the trade mark, and if it is inscribed “Made in Birmingham” you may be pretty sure it is not the right stuff. Indeed, the Tories themselves have discovered that they cannot take in Liberal voters by setting a bait with that particular thing. I pass to another challenge, which I see was made yesterday.

Liberal Performances.

We are told that we are feeble folks; that we are a disorganised, demoralised, incoherent pack; and they invite a contrast between their great legislative achievement and our miserable performance. I accept

that issue. Let us take the account between us. In 1892 the Liberal party came in with a small majority. Is it true we did nothing? Why, in the first Session Mr. Gladstone passed through the House of Commons the Home Rule Bill in the presence of the most violent and vindictive opposition that any Government ever had to meet. Lord Salisbury the other day admitted the magnitude of that achievement. It was thrown out by the House of Lords, but we are not responsible for the House of Lords. What was our next measure? Under the able guidance of Sir Henry Fowler we introduced a comprehensive Bill of county government which the Tories had talked of for years, but had never attempted. They did not dare to oppose it openly, but we met the most vexatious resistance. They do not love County Councils. They are going to destroy, or try to destroy even their own. Was that nothing, that measure of County Government? Well, then we did something in finance. We had to face vast demands for the Navy of this country—a thing which no patriotic Englishman has ever refused. We had to face it in times of great depression. We did not trifle with the matter; we made a comprehensive attempt to place the finance of this country upon a sound and upon a just basis—upon a basis of contribution from those who are best able to bear it, and relieved the income-tax of the humbler payers of that tax. How was that met? It was met by loud and angry threats that they would reverse that settlement, but the work remains, and it will remain. The Home Secretary, Mr. Asquith, introduced an Employers' Liability Bill, which was passed through the House of Commons, and which the House of Lords mutilated to such an extent that it was not worth the having, and so it came to an end. And there were many minor measures which I need not mention. Amongst others, I saw Mr. Chamberlain took credit for the Protection of Miners from Accidents. Well, that was our Bill. I think that is a fair account of the two years' work of a small majority. Now let us take stock of the work of the great majority.

The 1896 Education Bill.

Their first grand operation was the Education Bill of 1896. Mr. Balfour, speaking at Norwich the other day—he is always a most courteous and amiable opponent—was good enough to give me credit for having destroyed that Bill by making one speech over and over again. Well, it must have been a most admirable speech, and I would repeat it ten times oftener than I have made it already if I thought that by the repetition of that speech I could defeat a great measure of a majority of 150. The flattery is agreeable, but it is a little overdone. No, gentlemen, that Bill perished by its own badness, and by the hands of the supporters of the Government. They say we carry on guerilla warfare. Why, what guerillas we must be if we were able to tackle the principal measure of this great Government with a great majority, and compel them to withdraw it in their first session. No, gentlemen, what we did was to make the country

understand what the Bill was. As soon as the Bill was understood it came to an end, and we saved the School Boards of the country.

The Landowners' Relief Bill.

That disposed of, their next operation was the Agricultural Rating Act. It was founded on an allegation that agriculture was ruined, that the land of England was going out of cultivation, and on that plea they bestowed upon the landlords of the country an eleemosynary grant of a million and a half. Well, we protested, unfortunately in vain. We said that the distress was probably temporary. We tried to limit it to the distressed districts. That they would not have. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us it is to be perpetual. And to whom is the money to go? Why, it was admitted that this money from the rates in bad times might go to the tenant, but in good times would go to the landlord. I am happy to say the good times have come; but where is the one and a half million going? Since the cash was secured the tone has changed, and big landlords like Lord Londonderry, like Sir Matthew White Ridley, the Home Secretary, have protested that all this report of the ruin of the agricultural interest was far too gloomy and was altogether exaggerated; and the extraordinary thing is that the Chairman of the Agricultural Commission (Lord Cobham) now comes forward, and says, "Given a sound discretion in the choice of a farm, trained intelligence and sufficient capital, a farming career at the present time offers inducements in the shape of independence, varied and healthful occupation, and reasonable expectation of profit such as, combined, can be found in scarcely any other business." That is the present opinion of the Chairman of the Commission. If that is true, what is the justification of giving them a million and a half of the money of the taxpayers of this country? Of course that measure was a measure of gross injustice to the towns, to whom nothing was given. The rates in the country are comparatively low, and a million and a half is granted to them; the rates in the towns are twice or three times as great, and nothing is given at all. I venture to say that that measure was an egregious measure of class legislation, the appropriation to a particular interest of the public funds which ought to have been allotted to all.

This Year's Legislation.

That is the whole story of the first year's legislation of the great Conservative majority. This year they sought to mend their hand. They had Education Bill No. 2. They abandoned the attempt on the life of the School Boards, but though they did not murder them they starved them. They set to work to subsidise the Voluntary Schools. Well, so far as that is an assistance to education, I was not opposed to it, upon two conditions. One was that equal justice should be done to the Board Schools, and the other condition was that where money was given there should be, in some form or other, popular control. But what did they do? Without any control,

leaving it—in England at least—mainly in the hands of the clerical party, they gave £600,000 of public money to the Voluntary Schools, and only one-sixth of that amount to the Board Schools. Then their last Act was the Workmen's Compensation Bill. Now, that is one of those measures which were taken from our quiver. Did we treat that Bill as they treated Mr. Asquith's Bill before, and endeavour to destroy what was good in it? No. We recognised that that Bill was very defective. It left out agriculture; it left out shipping; it left out workshops. It applied to less than one half of the workmen of the country. But we did not endeavour to wreck that Bill. The real author of that Bill does not seem very well satisfied with its results. His friends the Tories are muttering discontent, and from the working class he has got very little credit. That, gentlemen, if you will take a careful observation of political history, you will find is always the case when a party seeks to live upon a policy which is not its own. The Duke of Wellington, at the head of a Tory Government, passed Catholic Emancipation. What credit did he get for it? Free Trade was passed by Sir Robert Peel, and his Government was destroyed. Mr. Disraeli in 1867 passed the Household Suffrage Bill, and at the election of 1868, when I myself came into Parliament, there was one of the greatest Liberal majorities which our party has ever enjoyed. Now I have endeavoured to meet that challenge, and if you compare the legislation of the two Governments—the Government with the small majority and the Government with the large majority—I claim that the work that we did was as good, and better; that it was more solid, and, above all, that it was more just than theirs.

Foreign Policy Worship.

I do not know whether I am exhausting you as well as myself, but there is one thing I think that I ought to speak about to-night. They have made such a miserable show in their legislative measures that we are called upon to fall down and worship the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury. I have a high respect for the character and abilities of Lord Salisbury; but when I am called upon to worship an idol, I should prefer an idol that did not find himself under the necessity of constantly coming forward to apologise for his failures. I am ready to admit the excellent intentions of Lord Salisbury. I should be very sorry to question the good intentions of any British Minister, but I am bound to examine the quality of his performances. I cannot charge myself with having at any time treated foreign relations in a factious and uncandid spirit. My opponents have borne testimony to that on more than one occasion. I know too well the difficulties of the Foreign Office, many of which are not revealed to the public at large. There is a great deal behind all these things which you have to bear in mind. That situation and these difficulties were very well explained by one who knew them well—in a speech by Lord Rosebery. Lord Rosebery said: "For the last twelve years you have been laying your hands with almost frantic eagerness on every tract of territory adjacent

to your own, or desirable from any point of view, which you thought it desirable to take. I daresay it was quite right, but the result is that you have excited to an almost intolerable degree the envy of other colonising nations, and in the case of many or several empires and countries formerly friendly to you, you have to reckon not on their active benevolence, but on their active malevolence. You have acquired a mass of undigested empire, so enormous a territory that it will be years before you can settle it, or control it, or make it capable of defence." That, gentlemen, is a true account, but it is an account which is not favourable to the success of diplomacy, and one of the consequences of this mass of undigested empire is that you are compelled of necessity to what the Tories call, in themselves, "graceful concessions," but which, if we were to practise, they would call "scuttle." I have always myself given Lord Salisbury credit for being only a half-hearted Jingo. His speech the other day at the Guildhall commanded my sympathy, almost my compassion. It seemed an appeal *ad misericordiam*. He said, "Oh, how could I help myself?" It had a tone of depression and melancholy, natural enough in one who had dwelt for twelve months in the bosom of the Concert of Europe—a Concert to which, he told us, a single discord was fatal, and in which the instruments appear to have been all out of tune. The whole of his speech, and other speeches he has made, were nothing but apologies for failures.

African Questions.

He declined to say anything about Africa. I do not wonder at that. He said it was "the plague of the Foreign Office." It is not a cheerful outlook, but who made it so? I have much that I should like to say about Africa and our relations to it. I cannot talk of everything to-night. I have talked too much already. But there is one thing which I must say about Africa. You know that a Committee sat to inquire into that wild and criminal attack which was made from British territory upon the South African Republic. That Committee passed, I suppose, the severest censure which it was possible to pronounce on the principal author of that transaction. It found him guilty of having, in a position of the highest trust, deliberately deceived everyone to whom he was bound by obligations of good faith. There was not a single member of that Committee who demurred to that finding. It was, therefore, with the utmost surprise, and, I must say, with the greatest condemnation that I heard the Colonial Secretary declare that "there had been nothing proved which affects Mr. Rhodes's personal position as a man of honour." No doubt every man must be the judge of what he regards as personal honour. At all events, I do not approve, I do not think you approve, that such a standard as that should be held up in the Colonial Office as one which will be tolerated in the conduct of those who have the administration of the dominions of the Queen.

Greece and Crete.

The difficulties in which we are involved at this moment abroad are so many and so great that I cannot attempt to deal with them to-night

and therefore the larger question of Africa, and that unhappy and unnecessary war upon our Indian frontier I cannot speak of on this occasion. But before I sit down I wish to say a word or two upon that humiliating chapter—humiliating to Europe, humiliating to England—the chapter of Crete and Greece. Now, I hope I am incapable of such misrepresentation of a political opponent as that to which I was surprised to hear Mr. Balfour had treated me in his speech at Norwich. He allowed himself to say “Greece rushed upon her fate urged by Sir William Harcourt.” He was categorically replying to the speech that I made in the spring at Norwich upon this very question. I will ask your leave to read the words that I used. I said, “It is easy for us to speak, but it is for Greece in this crisis of her fate to decide what she is to do. We ought not to forestall her judgment; we ought to say and do nothing which shall imperil her safety and her future.” And yet, with these words before him, Mr. Balfour says that Greece rushed upon her fate urged by Sir William Harcourt! He then turned, and I believe most unjustly turned, upon my friends in the House of Commons, many of whom signed the telegram of which you have all heard. In justice to these gentlemen, let any man read the telegram. It expressed sympathy with Greece, a sympathy which I believe every freeman in this country feels, which every Liberal ought to feel—a sympathy which her disasters have done nothing to diminish. As for urging her to go to war, there is not a single word in that telegram that could bear such a construction. The curious thing is, in the midst of all this, when they are trying to fix the blame upon us, two or three days ago the Austrian Prime Minister said the fault lay with Lord Salisbury. Well, he ought to know, and I will take the evidence of Count Goluchowsky against that of Lord Salisbury upon a subject in which Lord Salisbury is so specially interested. In order that I may not be supposed to be making a party statement, I give a sentence from the *Standard* newspaper of November 22nd, giving an account of this subject, “What the Austrian Prime Minister alleged was, in other words, that Great Britain, by its obstinacy, by rejecting good advice, has been responsible for most of the troubles in the East.” That is the view of the Austrian Prime Minister.

Lord Salisbury's Record.

I should like to put before you very briefly what I believe is a fair account of Lord Salisbury's attitude and action in this matter. The question of Crete began by the bad faith of the Turks. The Powers had undertaken that the Turks should make certain reforms. But the Turk never does make reforms, and the Powers entirely failed to enforce these reforms. Thereupon took place the interposition of the Greeks. Crete has a natural and a national affinity with Greece, and I believe it was a fatal error years ago that Crete was not made part of the kingdom of Greece. I have always held that opinion, and I hold it more strongly than ever to-day. But at all events the advent of Greece secured a declaration of autonomy for Crete on the part of the Powers, which, but for that advent, I do not believe would ever have taken place. Ten

months have elapsed and there is no autonomy yet. They cannot agree even upon a Christian Governor. Now, what was the position of Lord Salisbury? Lord Salisbury's views, I admit, were very correct, but what effect did they have? Throughout the whole of this conference, if you read the papers, the Power that prevailed was the Power that put its foot down, and that Power was not Great Britain. When the Emperor of Germany wanted to have his way he walked over to the British Embassy and said to Sir F. Lascelles that he chose this or did not choose that, or it was not worth while going on with the Concert. That is the method by which he got his way. Lord Salisbury knew very well what was to be done and what ought to be done. He argued and argued for the establishment of autonomy without delay, and the simultaneous withdrawal both of the Turkish and the Greek troops. But that autonomy was not established, and has not been established yet, and the Turkish troops have not been withdrawn. He refused first of all to blockade Crete, and afterwards Greece, but he yielded to both, and finally he agreed to the blockade of the Piræus.

Lord Salisbury's Yielding.

I want your attention to this despatch of Lord Salisbury's. He said he "considers that until the Powers themselves take measures to restore order in Crete the Greek contention is not unreasonable that no means exist of restoring order without Greek troops, and it is difficult to justify the exercise of force against Greece as a punishment for insisting on that contention," and he added, "if the idea of occupying Crete is given up, public opinion in England will not permit of their taking part in the blockade of ports of the mainland of Greece." That was on March 16th. On March 24th the Admirals and Ambassadors urged "the withdrawal of the Turkish troops and the appointment of a Christian Governor, the two measures which will best show the Cretans the sincerity as to autonomy." Neither of these things was done, and upon the 31st of March, in spite of what he had written, Lord Salisbury agreed to the blockade of the Piræus. The resolution to blockade the Piræus was followed very shortly by war, but a war was the only way in which a blockade could be prevented; for when war broke out there could be no blockade. In my opinion the real cause of the war was the delay of the Powers to establish autonomy, and the permission of the Turkish troops to remain. All these things Lord Salisbury saw perfectly well, urged perfectly well and yet upon every point he yielded. He tells us a general war has been escaped. Is it possible to maintain that all those Powers, who had laid down these very things, would go to war with one another if measures were taken to carry out their own decisions? A more preposterous proposition I never heard in my life.

A Vote of Censure.

The Opposition has been blamed, and I among the first, for not having moved a vote of censure. Let me deal with that. We were refused all knowledge of what the British Government was really doing. When we asked we were referred to the

French Prime Minister for information. We did give notice of a motion to declare that the forces of the Crown should not be used against Greece, autonomy not being established. That was Lord Salisbury's own opinion, declared in the despatch I have read, and it is rather a singular coincidence that that despatch was signed on the very day that I spoke at Norwich. Why, then, was I to move a vote of censure on the Government? Because they were maintaining the very position for which we contended, though they shortly afterwards abandoned it? But of that we knew nothing at all, and through the whole of these transactions we were denied any knowledge of the policy of the Government.

A Feeble and Irresolute Policy.

Such has been the unhappy result of a feeble and irresolute policy. Great Britain, contrary to its sympathies and to its convictions, has assisted at the ruin of Greece. The triumph of Turkey will remain a lasting opprobrium to the Concert of Europe, and a shameful disaster to European civilisation. Lord Salisbury still maintains a belief in the Concert in which his voice has been of such small avail. He called it the other day an embryo Federation. Well, I trust that embryo Federation will never come to the birth. It is not the influence of freedom, but that of despotism which rules in that Federation. He compares it to a steam-roller, but what has that steam-roller crushed? It has ground to powder the hopes of Armenia, and has scattered the dust of our pledges to the winds. It was not by submission to the dictation of a despotic federation that, in the early part of this century, Canning vindicated the liberties of Europe and of America. He refused to add the weight of Great Britain to the steam-roller of the Holy Alliance, and I think in those days the name of Great Britain was carried quite as high as to-day—perhaps a little higher.

Waning Faith in the Concert.

Why, even the faith of the organs of the Government in this steam-roller is shaken. I read this only four or five days ago in the *Times* newspaper leading article: "The most determined optimist must confess to a feeling of discouragement, if not of dismay, on learning that the Concert of Europe has once more broken down over the preliminaries of Cretan autonomy." This Concert which has been at work upon Cretan autonomy ever since the beginning of the year has, according to the *Times*, broken down on 20th November. It proceeds, "The steam-roller has puffed and groaned and revolved its flywheel with a provoking simulation of progress. So far as can be judged Colonel Schäffer, the Christian Governor, has been rejected because he is suspected of English sympathies derived from his English connections in Egypt." That is the weight of English counsels in the Concert of Europe; and then the article suggests that all forms of Christian Governors have been exhausted, and that nothing remains to fall back upon except, perhaps, "a croupier from Monte Carlo." That, it should seem, is the last word of the Concert of Europe.

The By-Elections.

And now, gentlemen, let me ask you in conclusion, what has been the effect of this on the opinion and judgment of the country? The subject is more agreeable for contemplation by ourselves than I observe it to be by our opponents. They tell us by-elections mean nothing. Let us look at the facts and the figures. There have been since the last general election ten Liberal seats vacated. All were contested, and none lost. There have been twenty Tory seats vacated, fourteen contested, and five out of the fourteen won by Liberals. Now, I am content to submit these figures to the actuary of any life assurance office, and ask to which of the two parties he will award the greatest expectation of life. Then they say, "Oh, 5 seats out of 14; what is that?" They say it is only 25 per cent. We are moderate people, and we will take 25 per cent. on account, but if you apply that fraction to the great majority and reduce their seats by that amount and add them to ours I will ask you, at least those of you who have passed the sixth standard, to determine what will be the final result upon the magnificent majority of 1895. But it is not only the seats won, but the seats we did not win but nearly won. How greatly our vote has been increased while theirs has been diminished! Now in the 20 seats contested in 1892 and 1895, and at the by-elections, I find that in 1892 there was a Liberal majority on those seats of 6,577. In 1895, when we were defeated, that was just turned round, and the Tories had a majority in those seats of 6,208. Curiously alike the turnover; but in the by-elections on those twenty seats the Liberal majority has been 7,023, and that in spite of defections through the Independent Labour party and of the stale register.

"Muzzles."

We don't mean in the future to have any stale register. And then they console themselves by the thought that it is all the muzzling order. It is not the muzzling of the dogs which has perturbed the spirit of Lord Londonderry. It is not the muzzling of the dogs that led to that serious warning by Mr. James Lowther at the Conservative conference. There are creatures whom he wants muzzled, but it is not the dogs. Well, gentlemen, do not suppose that the question of by-elections is simply counting the seats you win. It is the character of the victory. I remember very well the fight at Southampton in 1887. When we carried the seat at Southampton, we were in the midst of the struggle upon Mr. Goschen's Compensation to publicans. The Southampton election was won, and I venture to say that that election destroyed the Compensation Clauses. The single election in Walthamstow—what effect had it upon the attack of the Government upon the School Board? It had a most serious and conclusive effect.

Future Prospects.

Well, gentlemen, we are likely to have lively times. The medicines the Government are offering to a languishing party are, in my opinion, not of a restorative character. They are going to have an Irish Local Government Bill. That is not a very favourable crop for a Tory

soil. We are to have a revolution in our army system, and we are told nothing about it except that those who are most loudly clamouring for more money say that the one thing you must do is to distrust the military authorities. I cannot speak at length upon that to-night, but I have something I should like to say upon it hereafter. Lastly, Lord Salisbury has solemnly announced an attack on the London County Council, and Mr. Ritchie, a Cabinet Minister and a burgess of Dundee, is going to be indicted for Megalomania; and these "Little Londoners" are to set to work to dismember the metropolis. This is not a very promising policy, and already the Government seem to be shrinking from the rash enterprise of their leader. It is a very strange policy to be entered upon by the party which came in with a profession of tranquil social reform. Well, gentleman, I think I have tried at least not to shirk the challenges that have been made to the Liberal party. I have been delighted to meet you here, full of heart and of hope. I come to bid you be of good courage and of good cheer. You have got a hard fight to fight; you have steepes to climb, but we know how Scotch soldiers can fight. You are the compatriots of the Gordon Highlanders. You know your duty, and you will do it.

III.—KIRKCALDY.—NOVEMBER 26TH.

(Speech at Liberal Demonstration at night.)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said:—Fellow-burgesses of Kirkcaldy, I feel forty years younger to-day. When I call you fellow-burgesses I suspect I am one of the oldest burgesses of these burghs, so many years ago is it since I stood in this place as a candidate for the representation of the burghs. I feel to-night, I am bound to say, that I address you with some difference. I find myself in a very different position from that in which I am often placed when upon fighting platforms I have to meet the enemy. We are all old friends here. I do not suppose it is often that a defeated candidate returns to the field of battle to receive such welcome as I have received to-day. The recollections of youth are among the most agreeable of all the feelings of human nature. Amongst those agreeable recollections there is none more precious to me than the remembrance of that famous fight. I do not know why it was such a famous fight, because the circumstances were not so very remarkable. I myself, naturally enough, considered it a memorable occasion, but there are also so many of my friends around me who have chosen also to recollect it. It was not what I can call a famous victory; it was a glorious defeat. To me Kirkcaldy, in some respects, is changed; in other respects it is the same. I find in it to-day the same kindness from friend and from foe as I found forty years ago. In that respect Kirkcaldy is unchanged; in all other respects I should not have known it again. I left it an interesting child; I come again, and I find it a

full-grown, vigorous, stalwart man. Yet somehow or other I seem as if I recognised in it the same lineaments with which I was once so familiar ; but, as I say, in the heartiness of its kindness it is totally unchanged, and, what for me is equally pleasing, it is unaltered in the soundness of its Liberalism. There is at least one remarkable event. I should call it strange that I should have come here with a testimonial from Raith. That only shows that it is possible to conduct party conflicts without personal animosities. And ever since the day of my contest with Colonel Ferguson, of Raith, I am happy to say I have been upon terms of the closest intimacy and the greatest friendship with the family of Raith. It has been said—and I am glad to know it—that there are present friends of all parties, but I do not forget that I meet here to-night the Liberal association of Kirkcaldy. And therefore those whose misfortune it is not to be Liberal must be tolerant to-night and allow me to speak out and forgive my indiscretions. I spoke upon many things and upon many occasions at Dundee yesterday, and I do not know how much voice I have got left to-night. There are some things upon which I should like to speak to you, my old friends, to-day.

The Indian Frontier.

There is one question which at the present moment is one of the most critical importance to the fortunes of this Empire, and that is the war that is going on upon the Indian frontier. Of all the precious possessions of the English Crown there is none more precious than the Empire of the Queen in India. There is none which rests, and ought to rest, more upon principles of wisdom and of justice in its administration. I therefore think it necessary here, and elsewhere where I have the opportunity, to protest against the policy which is being pursued by her Majesty's Government in reference to the Indian frontier. There is a famous line in an old Roman poet in which he deplores wars which carry with them no triumphs, and this is one of those wars—a war in which, of course, our heart and soul is with our soldiers, those brave men, too many of whose lives have been vainly sacrificed. But it is our duty as a governing Empire to ask ourselves whether that war is necessary, and whether it was wisely undertaken. That is a question upon which the English people ought to be satisfied, and it is one upon which it is the duty of your representatives to call upon the Government of the country for their defence. Now, upon this matter many of you may have read the able and, I think you will be of opinion, the convincing speech of Sir Henry Fowler, who was Secretary of State under Mr. Gladstone's Administration responsible for the Government of India. We have a right, and it is our duty, to challenge that policy, because it is a policy which we deliberately condemned when we were ourselves responsible, when we had all the circumstances of the case brought before us, and when we determined that it was not right, that it was not expedient, that we should permanently occupy Chitral, in the mountains of India. It is very desirable that you should really understand what is the frontier policy.

The Two Policies.

There are two opinions upon the subject. There is one—the old opinion, and, I believe, the sound opinion, which was that of the great Indian administrator, Lord Lawrence—that in the frontier of India we should stand behind the mountains, that we should not embroil ourselves with the hostile tribes by whom those mountains are tenanted, that we should have peace with the Afghans, and if there were fears of invasion from Russia or any other Power, that it would be much safer to take our stand in that position than if we advanced our frontier further into the great mountain ranges. But then there came in what was called the forward policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government in 1878. They determined then to make an advance into Afghanistan, and many of you will remember who have read the history of that unfortunate war, and the catastrophe of Cavagnari at Kabul, what evil accrued from that invasion of Afghanistan. The English people had the whole facts of that policy before them at the General Election of 1880. They condemned that policy, which was called the "forward policy," by that great majority which returned Mr. Gladstone to power. One of the first acts of that Government was to retire from Kandahar. That was fiercely denounced by the Tory party, but there were no people who were stronger at the time against this policy of advance and of aggression than many of those who are now members of the present Administration; and one of the ablest speeches I ever heard delivered in the House of Commons was a speech delivered by Lord Hartington, the present Duke of Devonshire, against the invasion of Afghanistan and in support of the evacuation of Kandahar.

The Liberal Policy.

I wish you to understand exactly what is the difference between the two policies. Our view of the matter is, and always has been, that if you have this fringe of defence of independent tribes, who are in their own manner patriotic men, who are living in their own land, in their own valleys, peopling their own mountains, and with a passionate love of independence, that is the best defence you could possibly have against any Power which sought to invade us—men who are instinct with the same feelings as those which enabled the inhabitants of Switzerland to resist invaders in former times. Surely the true and wise policy is to make those men friends. They will be the enemies of your enemies, and they will be the friends of those who treat them well. It was determined that it was necessary to make an expedition to Chitral because the people of Chitral had ill-used an English envoy, Dr. Robertson; but the late Government, of which I was a member, had to consider what should be done to Chitral after the English had been relieved there. The view that we took was this. Chitral is a place nearly 200 miles distant from Peshawar, which is the headquarters in that district of the English power. The road to Chitral passed through many of these wild tribes, amongst others the Swats in the Swat Valley, and, therefore, it was impossible permanently to

occupy Chitral unless you occupied the roads in force. A proclamation was made to the tribes on the road that, if they did not interfere with our advance, their independence would be respected. If that proclamation had not been made and if they had not received that assurance, probably that expedition for relief could never have succeeded. What happened was this: Chitral was occupied, and is occupied now, and the tribes who had formerly been, and who at the moment appeared to be friendly turned hostile, and the consequence was that the road was endangered and the occupation of Chitral compromised.

The Occupation of Chitral.

It is perfectly obvious that if we are to occupy Chitral permanently you must keep and garrison the road, whether the tribes wish it or not. There has been a great deal said about breach of faith. Nobody has charged Lord Elgin personally with breach of faith. Disputes are made about this document and that document. Whether this paper or that paper proved the incompatibility of the proclamation with the present state of things rested, not upon the documents, but upon facts and upon the absolute necessity of the case. I spoke myself in the debate on the subject. I said the whole question was a question of the road, and I said the tribes may be friendly to-day, but to-morrow they may be hostile to us; and if they become hostile to you, what are you to do then? It is perfectly obvious that if the tribes became hostile you could not respect their independence, you would be compelled to keep open the road in spite of their opposition. What is the answer made by the Government? I should just like to read to you what Sir H. Fowler said in the Debate, and then you will see what was the case of the late Government. The late Government were advised by men of the greatest experience and judgment, that the formation of such a road meant a practical subjugation of the tribes and the annexation of the country between Peshawar and Chitral. Then he quoted Sir Neville Chamberlain:—"If we remain in Chitral, Bajaur, and Swat the tribesmen will only be kept quiet by our retaining at a great annual cost a sufficient force in the valleys to overawe them. To make a military road, to expect to keep it open without coming into collision with the tribesmen, is to my mind devoid of reasoning." . . . We have no more right in the district than we should have in Switzerland. . . . The practical question which will sooner or later have to be determined by this House is whether we are going to extend the frontier of India by at least 200 or 250 miles on the western side, in order to cover a large tract of country from which we can derive no possible advantage, and from which we can obtain no possible revenue, and in which we may be constantly embroiled with independent tribesmen patriotically defending their native soil." That was the statement which was made by our Government before any of these difficulties arose with reference to the tribes, and every single circumstance which we then foresaw has been literally fulfilled in every particular. Lord George Hamilton afterwards, and before

any of this fighting began, came forward and, with what I can only call characteristic levity, said, ridiculing us and our fears :—"The tribes were only eager to be annexed, and no forward movement of recent years had so completely put an end to the trouble with the tribes." What an admirable prophecy! He said the only difficulty of the Government was to resist the desire of the tribes for annexation, and that there was an end for ever of any trouble with the tribes. What a prophet! Does not that evince the profound want of acquaintance of the present Secretary of State for India with the conditions of our tenure of the scientific frontier and with the feeling of the tribes upon which they act? I say that we had before us the circumstances and the trouble of what would happen, and I maintain that the late Government came to a just and a true decision when they resolved that Chitral ought not to be occupied, and when they foresaw that if it was occupied, and if these tribes, who are very fickle in their attachments, turned against us, it was absolutely impossible the pledge contained in the proclamation,—viz., that the independence of the tribes should be respected—could be fulfilled. This is our statement with reference to the proclamation. We said the circumstances of the occupation of Chitral made it absolutely impossible to respect the independence of the tribes.

The Imperial Government and the Indian Government.

There is one point to which I must call attention. It has been said that we impeach the decision of the Government of India. The Government in India is not the authority which determines questions of high policy like this. It is determined by the Government at home, who are responsible to Parliament; and this I have to say—and I say it with regret, because it is the key to the whole of this forward policy—that the military element has captured the Government of India. This it is which has involved us in enormous expenditure; it has led, in my opinion, to unnecessary war; and I must comment upon a speech reported in the *Times*, I think, of October 1st—a speech made by Sir George White, the Commander-in-Chief in India—an after-dinner speech. It is rather a serious subject this to deal with in after-dinner speeches, especially by a Commander-in-Chief. It was received with great applause by the company at Simla. I will read only one sentence, though there is much to the same effect. He said :—"The history of all times has shown that civilisation and barbarism cannot exist conterminously, and at the same time peaceably, as independent neighbours." What does that mean? Is that consistent with a proclamation to the tribes of India that you intend to respect their independence? What conclusion would they arrive at from such a sentence as that "civilisation and barbarism cannot exist conterminously, and at the same time peaceably, as independent neighbours"? It means war, as far as I can see—war without limit—upon the frontier of India. What is the use, then, in the presence of declarations of that kind, of issuing proclamations that the independence of the tribes is to be respected? I think that Mr. Balfour said, "Where the British soldier has gone, there he must remain." I wonder

if that is the policy of the Government with reference to the 60,000 or 70,000 men who are now entangled in the defiles of the mountain chains of the North-West frontier. We must know what is this policy, because in my opinion upon the soundness or unsoundness of the policy depend the fortunes of your Indian Empire. We hear a great deal about prestige. Yes, prestige ought to be based upon common-sense and upon common prudence.

A Scientific Frontier.

Is it the intention of her Majesty's Government to maintain posts in these inaccessible valleys in order to establish what they are pleased to call a scientific frontier? It was christened a scientific frontier some five-and-twenty years ago. What sort of a frontier has it turned out to be, and what sort of a frontier is it to-day? A frontier where we have made unfriendly those upon whose friendship we ought to rely and who will be the allies of an invader and not his opponents. There is a still more serious aspect of this case. There is a foe far more to be feared in India than any enemy in the front, and that is a discontented people behind. These wars are wars of enormous expense. When the war in 1878 took place in Afghanistan it was estimated to cost three millions. It did cost, I think, £23,000,000, and the burden of that war remains upon the Indian people. That is a far more imminent danger in my opinion than the chimera of a Russian invasion. What do you suppose this occupation of Chitral is costing to-day, and what will it cost? It will cost precious British lives, but what will it cost in money? India, which has been plagued with famine and scourged by pestilence, is to be further afflicted by an unnecessary burden—with more debt, more taxation. What did the people of India profit by this transaction? If those millions which have been wasted upon a scientific frontier had been applied to the social advancement of the people of India, to irrigation which might have saved them from famine, would not that have been better for your Indian Empire than the manner in which all this treasure has been wasted in wars that never cease? In my judgment, of all the mischievous reactions of which this Government have been guilty the most mischievous and the most dangerous is that into which they hurried upon their accession to office to reverse the deliberate position at which we had arrived and embarked the British Army and the British fortunes in Chitral and in those mountains where now we find, contending with a handful of warlike tribes, an Army, as Sir H. Fowler told you, far greater than we had engaged at Waterloo, and much larger than was ever in a conflict in India before.

Little Englandism.

You will be told that this is all Little Englandism, and we hear that this and many other foolish enterprises are dignified by the name "extension of the Empire." Now Lord Salisbury, I thought very sensibly, the other day insisted that a thing is not necessarily great because it is big. He applied that to the County Council of London, but is equally applicable to other things. But he did also make another remark—that he did not want simply to go about painting more spots on the map

red. That, I am afraid, is a terribly Little England sentiment. I am as willing as anybody to see a reasonable extension of the Empire, but before I set to work to extend the Empire, which is now being extended in the direction of the mountains upon the Indian frontier, I should like to ask what are the advantages to the English people to be derived from such an extension? When you come to close quarters with these gentlemen who want to extend the Empire everywhere without regard to the benefit to be derived from it you do not find that they really rely upon any great idea. They sometimes talk about civilisation, sometimes they pretend it is for objects of religion, but now the favourite doctrine is that it is all for trade and you are to take vast tracts of territory in order to create new markets. I do not know that there is a great deal of trade in the Hindu-kush nor in parts of Africa which Lord Salisbury well described as light land. I endeavoured to point out at Dundee yesterday that there is a great deal more trade to be got out of cultivated and civilised nations, if you pursue it properly, than you will ever get from wildernesses of savages. I will venture to say—I am speaking here to a commercial community—that there is a great deal more trade to be obtained, in spite of adverse tariffs, out of the civilised people than ever you will get even out of the centre of Africa, and you ought to consider this matter. It is not a very exciting topic, but I am speaking as I know to a great commercial community, who will weigh these matters and judge of them. It is absurd to say that all extensions are good whatever be their character. I have known very many fine trades spoiled by rash adventures and wild enterprises. I have known many great and ancient estates ruined by people eager to purchase and annex to them properties that were of no value and which prevented them from developing the estates they already possessed. Take care we are not guilty of that folly ourselves.

British Trade With Foreign Countries.

It is said sometimes—and you ought to examine the question for yourselves—that the only way to extend trade is by extending possessions of your own, because your trade is falling off with other countries. But this is not the fact. At this moment three-fourths of the trade of this country is done with foreign countries and only one-fourth with British possessions. That is not the popular idea. The popular idea is that we are being driven out of our trade with all foreign countries by hostile tariffs, and that our only salvation is in seizing upon more possessions for ourselves. But bear in mind this figure of three-fourths of the trade, and that this proportion is and has been constant for the last fifteen or twenty years in spite of the immense increase of territory which we have acquired. And there is this remarkable fact also—I have gone into the figures and tested them—that in the bad times our foreign trade stood better even than the trade with our own possessions. Now, those are circumstances which ought to lead you to disbelieve that there is no method of extending trade except by seizing new possessions which after all turn out much more expensive than any trade you could possibly get from them.

A British Zollverein.

These figures with reference to trade with foreign countries the moment they come to be looked into put an end to that nonsense which you have heard of called by the name of the British Zollverein. The idea that you were to take all the British possessions together, and you were to have a particular tariff for them, and that, in place of that, you were to impose preferential duties against foreign States, the moment it came to be examined, was found to be nonsense, and it was put an end to at the Colonial Conference by the common sense of the Colonial Prime Ministers. I only wish the action of Lord Salisbury's Government was equal to the sentiments he has often expressed. I should like to read a passage from Lord Salisbury in which I entirely agree. He says:—"I confess I am more accustomed to address agricultural audiences than commercial, and I have always found that the worst way of recommending myself to an agricultural audience is to tell them they are flourishing." Well, anybody who knows anything about agricultural audiences may be well aware of that, and the leader of the agricultural party has evidently had painful experience of what is expected of a Farmers' Friend. He says:—"The only chance of conciliating their sympathies is to assure them they are on the brink of ruin." Lord Salisbury ought to know the agricultural mind; but then he goes on—and this is very well worthy of observation:—

"I have often thought how strange is the contrast between men in their individual and in their collective capacities. The individual Briton is the boldest, the most disregarding man as to danger you can find anywhere on the earth; he never expects that evil is coming upon him or doubts his power to resist it. The collective Briton, however, is as timorous as a woman; he sees danger everywhere. If any nation increases its exports for a single year the downfall of British trade is at hand. If any nation finds an outlet for its trade in some new or unexplored portion of the world, instead of rejoicing at the amount of natural resources which is proclaimed for human industry, he says, 'There is a rival to whom our fall will be due.'"

If I were to say that, I should be called a miserable Little Englander. This is the leader of the Big Englanders who tells you not to be afraid, that the mere fact of another country improving in its trade is not a matter to be deplored or to be feared, and that the English trader has nothing to apprehend. He proceeds:—

"I entreat them to abandon this state of fear and to believe that which all past history teaches us—that, left alone, British industry, British enterprise, British resource, is competent, and more than competent, to beat down every rivalry under any circumstances in any part of the globe that might arise, but the evil of the panic expression of the terror is that it gives a stimulus to other nations which they ought not to receive and which is not merited by the facts of the case."

More admirable common sense I never heard in my life; but that is absolutely inconsistent with what is called the Big England theory. I desire you to bear that in your mind.

Bimetallism.

Now, gentleman, I am not, you probably know, an admirer of Tory Governments. Still, I admit that there are advantages to be derived from their advent to power. In the first place they always find themselves obliged to take up Liberal measures to earn a character, though they disfigure them in order to persuade people that they are their own work. But there is another great advantage in the accession of a Tory Government to power; they have got to unload a great lot of rubbish on which they have traded in Opposition. That is an immense advantage, because when we start again we have got rid at least of a large mass of nonsense which they are compelled to repudiate as soon as they incur the responsibility of office. Now, one of the greatest of these rubbishes, in my opinion, is a thing—I do not know if you have ever heard of it; it is called bimetallism. Do not be afraid that I am going to trouble you with a discourse upon currency. But I can give you a definition of bimetallism which I think is a brief and a satisfactory one. It was given by a military gentleman in the House of Commons, who professed not profoundly to have studied it; but I do not think he could have given a better definition of it than he did when he said this:—"You take a shilling and you call it half-a-crown and you pay your debts with it." It would take all night to give you a better definition of bimetallism than that. We were told at the last election that bimetallism was a conquering cause. Of course, it was the profound faith of the leader of the House of Commons with a majority of 150 behind him. He had been for years stumping the country on behalf of the Silverites. We had two Cabinet Ministers who the other day reported upon the Agricultural Commission that there was no real remedy for agricultural distress except the adoption of bimetallism. It was to enable the landlords to pay their mortgages upon the principle of a shilling in the half-crown. It was to raise the price of wheat, and in that way everybody would be happy. Well, I have seen many odd scenes in my life in the House of Commons, but the most comical scene I ever witnessed was when, rising between Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Treasury, and Mr. Chaplin, the President of the Local Government Board, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who I must say is always sound upon these matters, got up to defend the British standard and honest money against the Tories. Well, of course, we cheered him to the echo; but this remarkable thing occurred. Mr. Balfour felt it necessary to do something to cover the retreat of his friends, and he gave a positive assurance, which I should like to read to you because it is very remarkable. He said:—"We will go to foreign nations and tell them we will make this great country a contributor to the bimetallic system. We will go back on the deliberately arranged method of providing a currency for India." That is closing the Indian mints, which had been the work of our Government. He would go back upon that. "We will reopen the Indian mints. We will engage that they shall still remain open, and we shall therefore provide for a free coinage of silver within the limits of the British Empire for a population greater than that of Germany,

France, and America." Well, it is impossible that a pledge could be more definite, more distinct, more conclusive. Who can wonder—that pledge, it appears, was given without ever consulting the Indian Government at all—who can wonder, then, that those countries did come on the invitation of Mr. Balfour, and proposed to the Government to close the Indian mints, to water down the gold in the Bank of England, to issue silver notes, to buy ten millions of silver a year? and nobody knew whether the Government were going to assent to these proposals or not. Well, they consulted the Government of India, and the Government of India said that any such proposal would be utterly disastrous to Indian finance. They might have known that before if they had known anything about the condition of India at present; and then upon this refusal of India of course they could not do what Mr. Balfour pledged himself to do, and with reference to the other extraordinary propositions they said they had not made up their minds about them, and would take time to consider. Now, I ask is that a position in which a responsible Government of this country ought to stand in reference to a question which is the vital basis of English commerce? A more extraordinary transaction, I say, never took place, and I should like to know what those foreign nations think of a First Lord of the Treasury who gave them a pledge and then found himself unable to redeem it, and, I may add, what the constituents of Lancashire thought of the member for Manchester from whom this cry of bimetallism came. No; these matters to a commercial community like yours are of the last importance. Bimetallism may be right or may be wrong, but it is a thing upon which the Government of this country ought to entertain no doubt. To go to the country and pretend on the part of responsible Ministers that they are going to tamper with the currency and then to have divided counsels! These people who are always telling us they have got a unanimous Cabinet are not unanimous upon a question which is vital to the prosperity of this country, and this I know, that this transaction has done more than anything else to shake the confidence even of the City of London in the good sense and the stability of the Administration.

Finance.

Now, gentlemen, before I sit down I want to say something to you on the subject of finance generally. That is a matter to which I have necessarily had to pay some attention. It is a subject that concerns you all, rich and poor alike. The growth in the public expenditure in this country is, in my opinion, a great danger and a growing danger. We are very apt to trouble ourselves about perils which are much more distant from us than this mischief of the waste of public money. It is a danger which is always present to those who, like myself, have been responsible for the public purse. Four years ago I gave a warning to the House of Commons as to the rate at which expenditure was growing, and since that time it has increased by ten millions a year. A sound system of finance, which we happily have established in this country, together with favourable times, has yielded

large surpluses. What has become of those surpluses? In former days a large surplus meant relief to the taxpayer in this country. You have had successive large surpluses and you have no relief to the taxpayer. I read a speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few weeks ago in which he made an almost piteous appeal to his colleagues to allow him to keep something which he could give to the taxpayer. That appeal appears to have been in vain. He is going to have another large surplus next April. He calculated on a smaller revenue by about a million—at present it exceeds the revenue of last year by about that amount. He thought he was going to lose £1,100,000 on the death duties. He is going to lose nothing or next to nothing. He was going to lose it by giving £800,000 to his friends the landlords out of that fund, but so far as I can see at present—I cannot predict what will happen before April—that £800,000 and more has been recouped out of the rise of the revenue, and I ask now again what is going to become of the surplus? Is it to go the way of the rest—is it to be dissipated in grants like those under the Agricultural Rating Bill? Is it to go to one class of the community? Is it to go to one class of schools as it has gone in the year that has passed? A great part of it has gone to the Navy, and I have never opposed that. The proposals which I made with reference to the death duties were in order to provide funds for the Navy. It has provided them; but I ask you again to consider the situation. Mr. Goschen told us last year that it was the very last demand he would have to make—that he considered the provision had been completed, that it was sufficient and efficient, so far as the Navy was concerned at least. It might be hoped that at last the taxpayer was going to get something out of the redundant revenue. Now, I want you to bear these figures in mind. In 1870 the public expenditure—that is, the net expenditure, I give the figures of Sir Henry Fowler's return—was 61 millions. In 1897 it was 88 millions—an increase of 27 millions in 27 years, of which 19 millions is due to the increase in naval and military expenditure and only half that amount upon the civil expenditure in this country. Now, what does that mean? Nineteen millions. It is more than the whole charge, exclusive of the sinking fund), of the National Debt. It is equivalent to the whole of the income tax and to the whole of the tea duty. That is the meaning of this increase that has taken place, and now we are told that we are to have this year a vast increase in the expenditure upon the Army.

The Expenditure on the Army.

Now, why are we to have a great increase of expenditure upon the Army? I do not wonder with this forward policy all round that there is a demand for what is called a forward Army. But there was this statement made at Glasgow the other day by a very important Minister of the Crown on behalf of the Government who, it is said, are going to make those great demands for increased military expenditure. Now this is what Mr. Chamberlain said at Glasgow: "As a matter of

fact, while our dominion and our responsibilities and our obligation have been increasing at a most rapid rate, there has been no increase in the Army for a period of thirty years until the small increase which was made last year." Well, I could not believe my eyes when I read that statement. I did think I had known something about the expenditure both upon the Army and upon the Navy of this country, and I took the pains to look in more than one newspaper to see if it was possible that this was a correct report, but I found that this statement, that there had been no increase in the Army for the last thirty years, was the same in all the newspapers.

The Strength of the Army.

This then is the allegation on which the Cabinet are proceeding, viz.: that for thirty years there has been no increase in the Army; let me tell you what the facts are. I will not go back thirty years, but I would go back twenty years to the official return. It is called "The Annual Return of the British Army in 1878." The annual return of the effective strength of the British Army in that year was 190,240 and in the year 1897 it was 220,000, or an increase of 30,000 within these thirty years. Well, is not it an extraordinary thing that a Government should come forward and by the mouth of one of its principal Cabinet Ministers state that the demand for the increase of the Army is due to the fact that there has been no increase of the Army for thirty years? But that is not all; besides that there is the most valuable—I should say invaluable—body of men, the Army Reserve, and in those twenty years from 1878 to 1897 the Army Reserve has increased from 11,000 to 70,900 men. Now you have got to add to the 30,000, 60,000 of the Army Reserve, and thus within twenty years you have an addition to the British Army of 90,000 men. Such is the accuracy of Mr. Chamberlain's information. But that is not all. You have got to add to that, because that is one of the most important additions, what has been added to the Indian Army. There has been an immense addition made there also. Well, now, test it in this way, not only by the number of men, but by the expenditure. Now I take the last 27 years, from the year 1870 to 1897 as shown in Sir H. Fowler's Return. In the year 1870 the expenditure of the Army was 12 millions; in 1897 it was 18 millions—that is, an increase of six millions; and, as I said, you must add to that the Indian Army. Of course it is part of the defence of the Empire and there you will find that in 1870 it was Rx. 70,000,000, and in 1895-96 there was an increase of Rx. 9,000,000. I should mention in reference to the Indian Army that it includes about three millions due to the loss on exchange, which, however, is part of the cost of the Indian expenditure on the Army; but, if you add these two together you will find that there has been within that period of 20 years an increase of 15 millions, or, if you exclude the exchange, 12 millions, upon Army expenditure. It is a fact which seems not to be generally known that the increase in Army expenditure has been as great, or greater, than the increase in the Navy. These figures may be dry, but they are important, and have

a most serious bearing on the taxation of the country. We have got no Army, we are told. I read yesterday or the day before a letter from Lord Eustace Cecil, who has been in the War Department, and he quoted a passage from Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, which is deserving of your attention, in a speech which I believe was made this year, and I will read it to you, and then I do not think you will be frightened out of your wits at the prospect of an immediate invasion of this country. Lord Wolseley says:—

“With respect to the Army, it seemed not to be generally known that the number of those who wore Her Majesty’s uniform was 800,000. The standing Army of England alone, with its Reserve, was over 300,000, and they must add to that the Militia, the Yeomanry, the Volunteers, and the standing Army of India, which made up the numbers he had mentioned. They could have at the ports of embarkation the finest body of men wearing Her Majesty’s uniform, an Army of 70,000 men, a long time before the ships could be provided to take them abroad.”

In the face of that statement we are told we have no Army. Well, I should like to know in what the Army is wanting if you can embark 70,000 men sooner than you can get the ships to take them. Is it decent or is it reasonable to say that we have no Army in this country and that the Army has not been increased for thirty years? But the extraordinary part of this is that we have got to ask this question.

Army Reform.

We have an expenditure upon the Army of £18,000,000 at home and Rs. 25,000,000 in India, and yet we are told that we have got no Army, and we are told that we are to spend more millions, and that our whole Army system is fundamentally wrong. It is not very satisfactory to have discovered just now that for that expenditure we have got no Army and that the whole Army system is wrong. But, of course, I do not say for one single moment, if a case could be made out that the Army of England is deficient and that its military equipment and system is wrong, that we ought not to put it right whatever it costs. I quite agree. The first indication of this new demand came from a great military authority, the Solicitor General, at Inverness. That has been followed by other indications from the Secretary of State for War and from Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, who gave that description which I read of the state of the British Army. I have great respect for these authorities, I myself would always be guided by men in that position who have a title to speak upon these subjects, but the extraordinary thing is that the people who make the loudest demand for expenditure, the dogmatic military amateurs, have no respect for the military authorities. I saw that at the Conservative Conference the other day one of the Tory party talked of the “old fossils of the War Office.” Another said that the only thing was to do away with the War Office. If we are to believe them, the War Office is good for nothing. If we are to do away with the War Office, who, I would like to know, is going to control all this money, upon whose advice is the money to be voted, and by whose

authority is it to be expended? I read in the *Times* newspaper only the other day this sentence; "The War Office will never solve the problem. The War Office has lost the confidence of the country. The condition of the Army is deplorable, and its cost is enormous." Its cost is enormous, it is true, but are you going to make that cost more enormous in the hands of a War Office which has lost the confidence of the country and has reduced the Army into a deplorable condition? They will devote more millions, we are told, as soon as Parliament meets, for this purpose. For my part I will be no party to voting those millions until I am satisfied that those millions are required. We are not going to vote millions for old fossils. We are not going to vote millions for a War Office which the *Times* describes as having lost the confidence of the country. The Liberal party have never been wanting in their desire and determination to place the defences of this country upon a proper footing, whether in the Navy or in the Army. They do demand to know that the money of the people and the taxes of the people are voted for proper purposes, and administered by the proper people.

Fidelity to the Liberal Cause.

I have detained you a long time upon very dry subjects, but they are matters which lie at the root of good government. They are matters which interest you all a good deal more I think than a good many subjects of party controversy. I will only conclude by expressing to you, as I did when I began, the extreme personal pleasure which I have had in returning to Kirkcaldy and having the opportunity of meeting you to-night and talking to you in a conversational manner as I have ventured to do upon subjects which are of deep interest to you all, to whatever class you belong. It is a great satisfaction to me to find myself here, not only for personal reasons, to know that your kindness is unchanged, and to recognise your unswerving fidelity to the Liberal cause. It is now, as it has been in the past, and I think it will be so in time to come. You have a good cause; you have in my friend who is sitting there a young and an able representative, a man who is without fear, a man who will stand up for the cause of the people and is fitted to represent such a constituency as that of Kirkcaldy. I have no doubt that these Burghs which I know so well will play the part in the future that well belongs to their intelligence, industry, and energy. The place has grown marvellously with the growth of this country. I think it is fitting that a place of its importance should take a leading part in the representation of the people of this nation. Glad I am to know, from personal experience and personal observation, that I shall always find in the representative of Kirkcaldy not only a valued friend but a most trusty supporter.

INDIAN FRONTIER POLICY

INDIAN FRONTIER POLICY

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY

GENERAL SIR JOHN ADYE, G.C.B., R.A.

WITH A MAP

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1897

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PREFACE

THE subject of our policy on the North-West frontier of India is one of great importance, as affecting the general welfare of our Eastern Empire, and is specially interesting at the present time, when military operations on a considerable scale are being conducted against a combination of the independent tribes along the frontier.

It must be understood that the present condition of affairs is no mere sudden outbreak on the part of our turbulent neighbours. Its causes lie far deeper, and are the consequences of events in bygone years.

In the following pages I have attempted to give a short historical summary of its varying phases, in the hope that I may thus assist the public in some degree to understand its general bearings, and to form a correct opinion of the policy which should be pursued in the future.

JOHN ADYE,

General.

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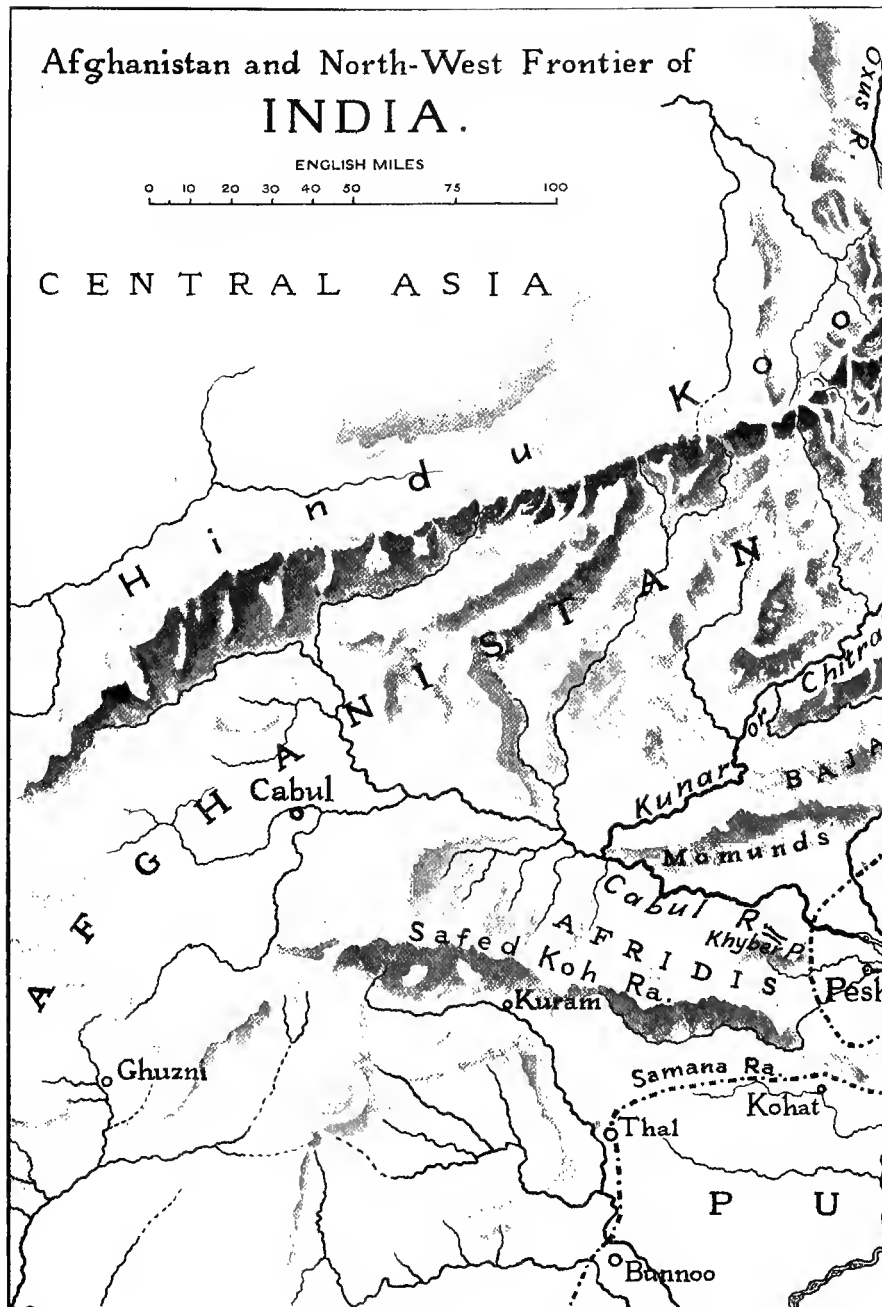
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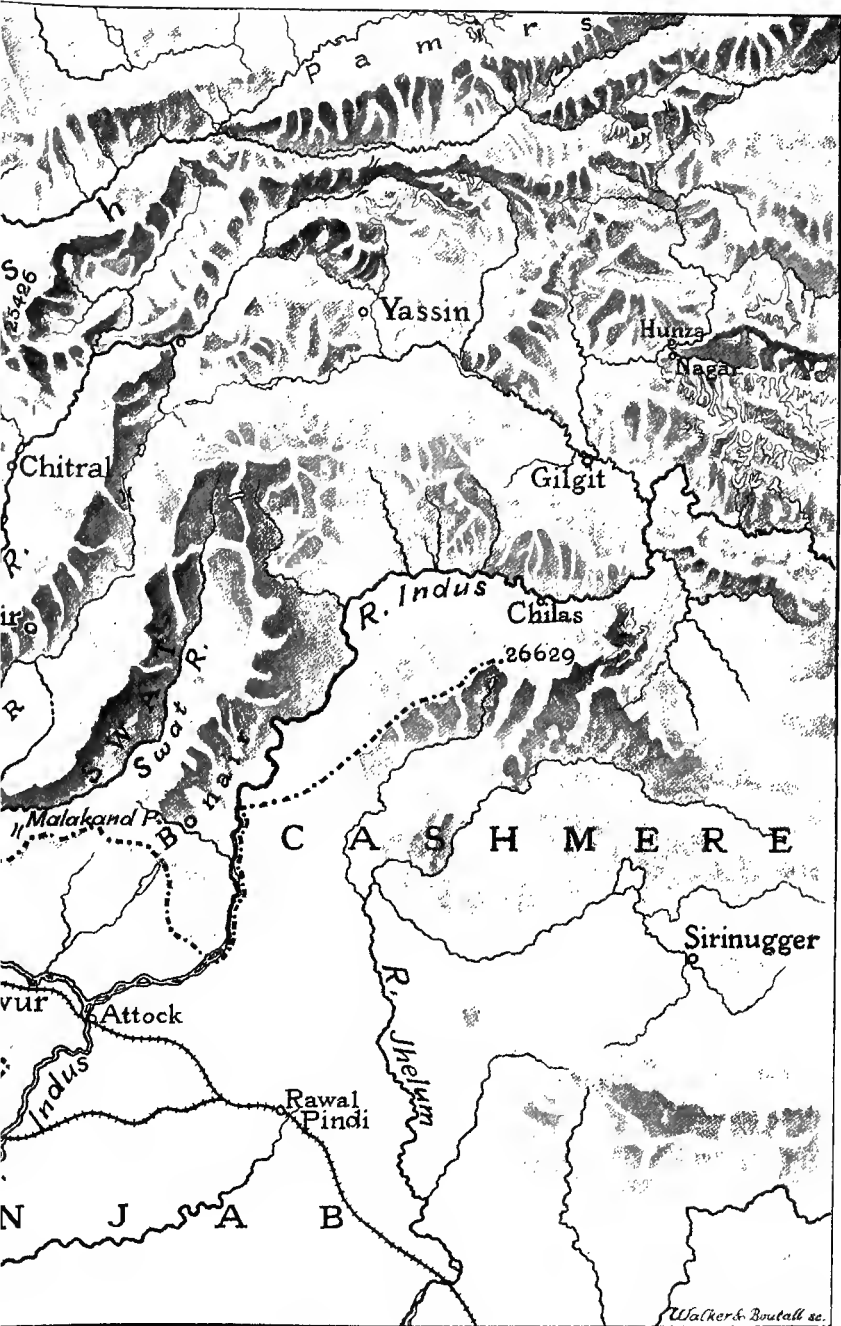
Afghanistan and North-West Frontier of INDIA.

ENGLISH MILES

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CENTRAL ASIA





INDIAN FRONTIER POLICY

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH



CHAPTER I

EVENTS PRIOR TO, AND INCLUDING, FIRST AFGHAN WAR OF 1839-41

Proposed Invasion of India by Napoleon I.—Mission of Burnes to Cabul—Its Failure—Hostility of Russia and Persia—First Afghan War, 1839-41—Its Vicissitudes and Collapse.

IN considering the important and somewhat intricate subject of policy on the North-Western frontier of our Indian Empire it will be desirable, in the first place, to give a concise history of the events which have guided our action, and which for many years past have exercised a predominating influence in that part of our Eastern dominion.

Speaking generally, it may, I think, be said that the main features of our policy on the North-Western frontier have been determined by the gradual advance of Russia southwards, and partly also by the turbulent character of the people of Afghanistan, and of the independent tribes who inhabit the great

region of mountains which lie between Russia and ourselves.

These two circumstances—the first having been the most powerful—have led us into great wars and frontier expeditions, which as a rule have been costly, and in some cases unjust, and their consequences have not tended to strengthen our position either on the frontier or in India itself.

It will be well therefore to give an outline of the Russian conquests in Central Asia to the north of Afghanistan, and also of our dealings with the rulers of Cabul in bygone years, and we shall then be better able to judge of our present position, and to determine the principles which should guide our North-Western frontier policy.

One of the first threats of invasion of India early in the century was planned at Tilsit, and is thus described by Kaye : ¹ ‘ Whilst the followers of Alexander and Napoleon were abandoning themselves to convivial pleasures, those monarchs were spending quiet evenings together discussing their future plans, and projecting joint schemes of conquest. It was then that they meditated the invasion of Hindostan by a confederate army uniting on the plains of Persia ; and no secret was made of the intention of the two great European potentates to commence in the following spring a hostile demonstration—Contre les possessions de la compagnie des Indes.’

¹ *History of the War in Afghanistan.*

The peril, however, was averted by a treaty at Teheran in March 1809, in which the Shah of Persia covenanted not to permit any European force whatever to pass through Persia towards India, or towards the ports of that country. And so the visionary danger passed away.

The old southern boundary of Russia in Central Asia extended from the north of the Caspian by Orenburg and Orsk, across to the old Mongolian city of Semipalatinsk, and was guarded by a cordon of forts and Cossack outposts. It was about 2,000 miles in length, and ¹ ‘ abutted on the great Kirghis Steppe, and to a certain extent controlled the tribes pasturing in the vicinity, but by no means established the hold of Russia on that pathless, and for the most part lifeless, waste.’

During all the earlier years of the century, while we were establishing our power in India, constant intrigues and wars occurred in Persia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia ; and rumours were occasionally heard of threats against ourselves, which formed the subject of diplomatic treatment from time to time ; but in reality the scene was so distant that our interests were not seriously affected, and it was not until 1836 that they began to exercise a powerful influence as regards our policy on the North-West frontier.

¹ *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1865.

In that year Lord Auckland was Governor-General, and Captain Alexander Burnes was sent on a commercial mission up the Indus, and through the Kyber Pass, to Cabul, where he was received in a friendly manner by the Ameer Dost Mahomed. It must be borne in mind that neither Scinde nor the Punjaub was then under our rule, so that our frontiers were still far distant from Afghanistan. It was supposed at the time that Russia was advancing southward towards India in league with Persia, and the mission of Burnes was in reality political, its object being to induce the Ameer to enter into a friendly alliance.

Dost Mahomed was quite willing to meet our views, and offered to give up altogether any connection with the two Powers named. It, however, soon became apparent that our interests were by no means identical; his great object, as we found, being to recover the Peshawur district, which had been taken a few years previously by Runjeet Singh, while we, on the other hand, courted his friendship chiefly in order that his country might prove a barrier against the advance of Russia and Persia.

These respective views were evidently divergent and the issues doubtful; when suddenly a Russian Envoy (Vicovitch), also on a so-called commercial mission, arrived at Cabul, offering the Ameer money

and assistance against the Sikhs. This altered the aspect of affairs. Burnes wrote to the Governor-General that the Russians were evidently trying to outbid us. Still some hope remained, until definite instructions arrived from Lord Auckland declining to mediate with or to act against Runjeet Singh, the ruler of the Punjab. The Ameer felt that we made great demands on him but gave him nothing in return. It then became evident that the mission of Burnes was a failure, and in April 1838 he returned to India. It was our first direct effort to provide against a distant and unsubstantial danger, and it failed; but unfortunately we did not take the lesson to heart.

In the meantime the Shah of Persia, instigated by Russia, besieged Herat, but after months of fruitless effort, and in consequence of our sending troops to the Persian Gulf, the Shah at length withdrew his army.

It was not only the hostile efforts of the Shah on Herat in 1838 which were a cause of anxiety to the Indian Government; but, as Kaye writes,¹ 'far out in the distance beyond the mountains of the Hindoo Koosh there was the shadow of a great Northern army, tremendous in its indistinctness, sweeping across the wilds and deserts of Central Asia towards the frontiers of Hindostan.' That great Northern

¹ Kaye's *War in Afghanistan*.

army, as we know now, but did not know then, was the column of Perofski, which had left Orenburg for the attempted conquest of Khiva, but which subsequently perished from hardships and pestilence in the snowy wastes of the Barsuk Desert, north of the Aral.

In view of all the circumstances—of the supposed designs of Russia and Persia, and of the hostility and incessant intrigues in Afghanistan—the Government of India were sorely perplexed, and opinions amongst the authorities widely differed as to the policy to be pursued. Lord Auckland, however, at length decided on the assemblage of a British force for service across the Indus. In his manifesto issued in December 1838 he first alluded to the Burnes mission, and the causes of its failure. He then referred to the claims of Shah Soojah, a former ruler of Afghanistan (who had been living for some years in exile within our territories) and said we had determined, in co-operation with the Sikhs, to restore him to power as Ameer of Cabul.

It was arranged that Shah Soojah should enter Afghanistan with his own troops, such as they were, supported by a British army marching through Scinde and Beloochistan. The Governor-General expressed a hope that tranquillity would thus be established on the frontier, and a barrier formed against external aggression; and he ended by pro-

claiming that when the object was accomplished the British army would be withdrawn.

This was indeed a momentous decision. The Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir Henry Fane, had already given an adverse opinion, saying that 'every advance you make beyond the Sutlej in my opinion adds to your military weakness.'

On the decision becoming known in England many high authorities, and the public generally, disapproved of the expedition. The Duke of Wellington said that 'our difficulties would commence where our military successes ended,' and that 'the consequences of crossing the Indus once, to settle a Government in Afghanistan, will be a perennial march into that country.' The Marquis Wellesley spoke of 'the folly of occupying a land of rocks, sands, deserts, and snow.' Sir Charles Metcalfe from the first protested, and said, 'Depend upon it, the surest way to bring Russia down upon ourselves is for us to cross the Indus and meddle with the countries beyond it.' Mr. Elphinstone wrote: 'If you send 27,000 men up the Bolam to Candahar, and can feed them, I have no doubt you can take Candahar and Cabul and set up Soojah, but as for maintaining him in a poor, cold, strong, and remote country, among a turbulent people like the Afghans, I own it seems to me to be hopeless. If you succeed you will I fear weaken the position against Russia.

The Afghans are neutral, and would have received your aid against invaders with gratitude. They will now be disaffected, and glad to join any invader to drive you out.'

Mr. Tucker, of the Court of Directors, wrote to the Duke of Wellington: 'We have contracted an alliance with Shah Soojah, although he does not possess a rood of ground in Afghanistan, nor a rupee which he did not derive from our bounty as a quondam pensioner.' He added, that 'even if we succeed we must maintain him in the government by a large military force, 800 miles from our frontier and our resources.'

The above were strong and weighty opinions and arguments against the rash and distant enterprise on which the Government of India were about to embark. But there is more to be said. Independently of the result in Afghanistan itself, it must be borne in mind that the proposed line of march of the army necessarily led through Scinde and Beloochistan, countries which (whatever their former position may have been) were then independent both of the Ameer and of ourselves.

The force from Bengal, consisting of about 9,500 men of all arms, with 38,000 camp followers, accompanied by Shah Soojah's levy, left Ferozepore in December, and crossing the Indus, arrived at Dadur, the entrance to the Bolam Pass, in March 1839.

Difficulties with the Ameers of Scinde at once arose, chiefly as to our passage through their territories; but their remonstrances were disregarded, and they were informed that 'the day they connected themselves with any other Power than England would be the last of their independence, if not of their rule.'¹

The army then advanced through the Bolam, and reached Quetta on March 26th. But here again obstacles similar in character to those just described occurred, and Sir Alexander Burnes visited the ruler of Beloochistan (the Khan of Khelat), demanding assistance, especially as to supplies of food. The Prince, with prophetic truth, pointed out that though we might restore Shah Soojah, we would not carry the Afghans with us, and would fail in the end. He alluded to the devastation which our march had already caused in the country; but having been granted a subsidy, unwillingly consented to afford us assistance; and the army, leaving possible enemies in its rear, passed on, and reached Candahar without opposition in April. At the end of June it recommenced its march northwards, and Ghuznee having been stormed and captured, our troops without further fighting arrived at Cabul on April 6. Dost Mahomed, deserted for the time by his people, fled northward over the Hindoo Koosh, finding a temporary

¹ Kaye's *War in Afghanistan*.

refuge in Bokhara, and Shah Soojah reigned in his stead.

So far the great expedition had apparently accomplished its object, and the success of the tripartite treaty between ourselves, the Sikhs, and the new Ameer had been successfully carried out, almost entirely, however, by ourselves as the predominant partner.

The time therefore would seem to have arrived when, in fulfilment of Lord Auckland's proclamation, the British army should be withdrawn from Afghanistan. For the moment this appeared to be the case. But in reality it was not so, and our position soon became dangerous, then critical, and at last desperate. In the first place, the long line of communication was liable at any time to be interrupted, as already mentioned; then, again, the arrival of Shah Soojah had excited no enthusiasm; and the very fact that we were foreigners in language, religion and race, rendered our presence hateful to his subjects. In short, the new Ameer was, and continued to be, a mere puppet, supported in authority by British bayonets.

These conditions were apparent from the first day of his arrival, and grew in intensity until the end. Shah Soojah himself soon discovered that his authority over his people was almost nominal; and although he chafed at our continued presence in the

country, he also felt that the day of our departure would be the last of his reign, and that our withdrawal was under the circumstances impossible. But the situation was equally complicated from our own point of view. If, as originally promised, the British troops were withdrawn, the failure of the expedition would at once become apparent by the anarchy which would ensue. On the other hand, to retain an army in the far-distant mountains of Afghanistan would not only be a breach of faith, but, while entailing enormous expense, would deprive India of soldiers who might be required elsewhere.

After lengthy consideration, it was decided to reduce the total of our force in the country, while retaining a hold for the present on Cabul, Ghuznee, and Candahar, together with the passes of the Kyber and Bolam. In short, the British army was weakly scattered about in a region of mountains, amongst a hostile people, and with its long lines of communication insufficiently guarded. Both in a military and a political point of view the position was a false and dangerous one.

General Sir John Keane, who was about to return to India, writing at the time, said ‘Mark my words, it will not be long before there is here some signal catastrophe.’ During the summer of 1840 there were troubles both in the Kyber and Bolam passes. In the former the tribes, incensed at not receiving

sufficient subsidies, attacked the outposts and plundered our stores ; while in Beloochistan matters were so serious that a British force was sent, and captured Khelat, the Khan being killed, and part of his territory handed over to Shah Soojah.¹ Rumours from Central Asia also added to our anxieties. Although the failure of the Russian attempt on Khiva became known some months later, it excited apprehension at the time amongst our political officers in Cabul. Sir Alexander Burnes, during the winter of 1839, expressed opinions which were curiously inconsistent with each other. ‘I maintain,’ he said, ‘that man to be an enemy to his country who recommends a soldier to be stationed west of the Indus ;’ while at the same moment he advocated the advance of our troops over the Hindoo Koosh into Balkh, so as to be ready to meet the Russians in the following May.

Sir William McNaghten, the chief political officer in Cabul, went still further, and in April 1840 not only urged a march on Bokhara, but also contemplated sending a Mission to Kokand, in order, as he said, ‘to frustrate the knavish tricks of the Russians in that quarter.’

Our position, however, at that time was sufficiently precarious without adding to our anxieties by

¹ In the life of Sir Robert Sandeman, recently published, it is stated that the alleged treachery of Mehrab Khan, which cost him his life, was on subsequent inquiry not confirmed.

distant expeditions in Central Asia, even had the Russians established themselves in the Principalities, which at that time was not the case. Not only was Afghanistan itself seething with treachery and intrigues from one end to the other, but the Sikhs in the Punjaub, our nominal allies, had, since the death of Runjeet Singh, become disloyal and out of hand. Beloochistan was in tumult; the tribes in the Kyber, ever ready for mischief, incessantly threatened our communications; so that we were certainly in no condition to enter upon further dangerous expeditions against distant imaginary foes.

Sir Jasper Nicholls, the Commander-in-Chief, strongly objected to any advance. 'In truth,' he said, 'we are much weaker now than in 1838.'

During the latter months of 1840, and in 1841, matters became steadily worse, and all Afghanistan seemed ripe for revolt. 'We are in a stew here,' wrote Sir William McNaghten in September; 'it is reported that the whole country on this side the Oxus is up in favour of Dost Mahomed, who is certainly advancing in great strength.' Again, in a letter to Lord Auckland, he said 'that affairs in this quarter have the worst possible appearance'—and he quoted the opinion of Sir Willoughby Cotton, that 'unless the Bengal troops are instantly strengthened we cannot hold the country.'

At this critical period, however, Dost Mahomed

was heavily defeated at Bamian, on the Hindoo Koosh, voluntarily surrendering shortly afterwards, and for the moment prospects looked brighter; but the clouds soon gathered again, and the end was at hand.

The Governor-General of India had throughout the whole war wisely and steadfastly resisted the proposed further operations in Central Asia; and the Court of Directors in London wrote as follows: 'We pronounce our decided opinion that, for many years to come, the restored monarchy will have need of a British force in order to maintain peace in its own territory, and prevent aggression from without.' And they go on: 'We again desire you seriously to consider which of the two alternatives (a speedy retreat from Afghanistan, or a considerable increase of the military force in that country) you may feel it your duty to adopt. We are convinced that you have no middle course to pursue with safety and with honour.' The Government of India, hesitating to the last, failed in adopting either of the alternatives.

In November, 1841, Sir Alexander Burnes was treacherously murdered by a mob in Cabul, which was followed by an insurrection, and the defeat of our troops. General Elphinstone, who was in command, writing to Sir W. McNaghten on November 24, said that 'from the want of provisions and forage, the

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reduced state of our troops, the large number of wounded and sick, the difficulty of defending the extensive and ill-situated cantonment we occupy, the near approach of winter, our communications cut off, no prospect of relief, and the whole country in arms against us, I am of opinion that it is not feasible any longer to maintain our position in this country, and that you ought to avail yourself of the offer to negotiate that has been made to you.'

This was conclusive. Our Envoy early in December met the Afghan chiefs, and agreed that we should immediately evacuate the country, and that Dost Mahomed, who was in exile in India, should return. On December 23, Sir William McNaghten was treacherously murdered at a conference with the Afghan Sirdars, within sight of the British cantonment, and then came the end.

The British force at Cabul, leaving its guns, stores and treasure behind, commenced its retreat on January 6, 1842; but incessantly attacked during its march, and almost annihilated in the Koord Cabul Pass, it ceased to exist as an organised body. General Elphinstone and other officers, invited to a conference by Akbar Khan, were forcibly detained as hostages, and on January 13 a solitary Englishman (Dr. Brydon) arrived at Jellalabad, being, with the exception of a few prisoners, the sole remaining representative of the force.

I have given this short sketch of the first Afghan war because, disastrous as it was, the causes of our failure were due throughout far more to rash and mistaken policy than to any shortcomings of the British troops engaged. Kaye in his 'History' gives a clear summary of its original object and unfortunate results: 'The expedition across the Indus was undertaken with the object of creating in Afghanistan a barrier against encroachment from the west.' 'The advance of the British army was designed to check the aggression of Persia on the Afghan frontier, and to baffle Russian intrigues by the substitution of a friendly for an unfriendly Power in the countries beyond the Indus. After an enormous waste of blood and treasure, we left every town and village of Afghanistan bristling with our enemies. Before the British army crossed the Indus the English name had been honoured in Afghanistan. Some dim traditions of the splendour of Mr. Elphinstone's Mission had been all that the Afghans associated with their thoughts of the English nation, but in their place we left galling memories of the progress of a desolating army.'

The history of the war from first to last deserves careful consideration; and if the lessons taught by it are taken to heart, they will materially assist in determining the principles which should guide our policy on the North-West frontier of India.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS PRIOR, AND LEADING UP, TO SECOND
AFGHAN WAR

Conquest of Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokand by Russia—British Conquest of Scinde and the Punjaub—Our Policy with the Frontier Tribes—Treaty of 1857 with Dost Mahomed—Shere Ali succeeds as Ameer, 1868—War of 1878—Abdul Rahman becomes Ameer—Withdrawal of British Army from Afghanistan, 1881.

FOR a few years subsequent to the war, our frontier policy happily remained free from complications, and it will be desirable now to refer shortly to the progress of Russia in Central Asia, and of her conquests of the decaying Principalities of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand.

Previous to 1847 the old boundary line of Russia south of Orenburg abutted on the great Kirghis Steppe, a zone¹ (as the late Sir H. Rawlinson told us) of almost uninhabited desert, stretching 2,000 miles from west to east, and nearly 1,000 from north to south, which had hitherto acted as a buffer between Russia and the Mahomedan Principalities below the Aral.

² 'It was in 1847, contemporaneously with our

¹ Parliamentary Papers : *Afghanistan*, 1878.

² Extract from *Quarterly Review*, October 1865.

final conquest of the Punjaub, that the curtain rose on the aggressive Russian drama in Central Asia which is not yet played out. Russia had enjoyed the nominal dependency of the Kirghis-Kozzacks of the little horde who inhabited the western division of the great Steppe since 1730; but, except in the immediate vicinity of the Orenburg line, she had little real control over the tribes. In 1847-48, however, she erected three important fortresses in the very heart of the Steppe. These important works—the only permanent constructions which had hitherto been attempted south of the line—enabled Russia, for the first time, to dominate the western portion of the Steppe and to command the great routes of communication with Central Asia. But the Steppe forts were after all a mere means to an end; they formed the connecting link between the old frontiers of the empire and the long-coveted line of the Jaxartes, and simultaneously with their erection arose Fort Aralsk, near the embouchure of the river.’

The Russians having thus crossed the great desert tract and established themselves on the Jaxartes (Sir Daria), from that time came permanently into contact with the three Khanates of Central Asia, and their progress since that date has been comparatively easy and rapid.

The Principalities had no military organisation which would enable them to withstand a great Power;

their troops and those of Russia were frequently in conflict of late years; but the battles were in a military sense trivial; and the broad result is, that Russia has been for some years predominant throughout the whole region; and her frontiers are now continuous with the northern provinces of both Afghanistan and Persia. It is this latter point which is the important one, so far as we are concerned, but before entering into its details, it will be well to consider the nature of the great country over which Russia now rules.

Until within the last few years our information as to its general character was very limited; but the accounts of numerous recent travellers all concur in describing it as consisting for the most part of sterile deserts, deficient in food, forage, fuel and water. There are a certain number of decayed ancient cities here and there, and there are occasional oases of limited fertility, but the general conditions are as just described. With the exception of the one railway from the Caspian to Samarcand, the means of transport are chiefly pack animals. Speaking roughly, the dominions of Russia in Central Asia, south of Orenburg, may be taken as almost equal in geographical extent to those of our Indian Empire; but there is this striking difference between the two, that whilst the population of India is computed at 250 millions, that of Central Asia, even at

the highest computation, is only reckoned at four or five millions, of whom nearly half are nomadic—that is, they wander about, not from choice, but in search of food and pasturage. The extreme scantiness of the population is of itself a rough measure of the general desolation.

The military position of Russia in Central Asia, therefore, is that of a great but distant Power, which during the last fifty years has overrun and taken possession of extended territories belonging to fanatical Mahomedan tribes. The people themselves are, many of them, warlike and hostile ; but they are badly armed, have no discipline, training, or leaders, and are not therefore in a position to withstand the advance of regular troops. Consequently Russia is enabled to hold the country with a comparatively small force of scattered detachments, which are, however, supplied with arms, munitions and stores under great difficulties from far distant centres, and her troops are practically incapable of concentration. Indeed the farther they go the weaker they become ; the very magnitude of the area being an additional cause of weakness. This is a condition somewhat precarious in itself, and would certainly not appear to be an alarming one as a basis of attack against our Empire, even were India close at hand.

While Russia, however, was completing the subjugation of the Principalities, and advancing her

frontiers until they became conterminous with the northern provinces of Afghanistan and Persia, the Government of India, by the great wars of 1843 and 1849, having annexed Scinde and the Punjaub, advanced our frontiers in a similar manner, so that the people both of Beloochistan and Afghanistan, hitherto far remote from our dominions, now became our neighbours.

In the life of Sir Robert Sandeman recently published, a very interesting account is given, not only of the nature of the country along the border, but of the policy pursued for many years with the independent tribes. It says: 'By the conquest of Scinde in 1843, and the annexation of the Punjaub in 1849, the North-West frontier of India was advanced across the river Indus to the foot of the rocky mountains which separate the plains of the Indus valley from the higher plateaus of Afghanistan and Khelat. These mountain ranges formed a vast irregular belt of independent or semi-independent territory, extending from Cashmere southward to the sea near Kurrachee, a total length of about 1,200 miles.' The belt of territory above described was 'inhabited by fierce marauding tribes, often at war with each other, ever and anon harrying the plains of the Punjaub and Scinde, and the constant terror of the trade caravans during their journey through the passes.'

The policy pursued for many years is thus described : ‘The disasters of the first Afghan war, and the tragical episode of Khelat, were fresh in men’s recollections, and created a strong feeling against political interference with tribes beyond our border’ ‘Accordingly, from the very first, the system of border defence maintained by the Punjaub Government was not purely military, but partly military, partly political and conciliatory. While the passes were carefully watched, every means was taken for the promotion of friendly intercourse.’ Roads were made, steamers started on the Indus, and inundation canals developed along the border.

So long as they were friendly the tribesmen had free access to our territory, could hold land, enlist in our army, and make free use of our markets. As a result, the deadly hatred formerly prevailing between the Sikhs and the hill tribes soon disappeared ; raids became exceptional ; cultivation increased ; the bazaars of our frontier stations teemed with Afghans, with trains of laden camels, who at the close of the season returned laden with our goods. Disputes were voluntarily referred by independent tribesmen for the arbitration of British officers. Such (it is stated in the life of Sir Robert Sandeman) were the results of Lawrence’s frontier policy, and no words are required to emphasise these excellent arrangements, which remained in force for many years.

Before leaving this part of the subject, it may be as well to anticipate a little and to allude to the successful part taken by Sir Robert Sandeman in 1876 on his appointment as our agent to the Khan of Khelat. It is important in the first place to mention, that whilst in Afghanistan the tribes all along the frontier were for the most part independent of the Ameer of Cabul, and were ruled by their own 'jirgahs' or councils, in Beloochistan the mode of government was so far different that the chiefs, whilst acknowledging the Khan as their hereditary ruler, were entitled, not only to govern their own tribes, but to take part in the general administration of the country as the constitutional advisers of the paramount chief. The dangers arising from the vicinity of three powerful kingdoms, Persia, Afghanistan and Scinde, had no doubt led them to perceive the necessity of co-operation, which was established about the middle of the eighteenth century. Although the constitution as above described secured to the confederated tribes nearly a century of prosperity and peaceful government, it so happened that for some years before 1876, owing to the weakness of the then ruler, and partly to turbulence of the chiefs, the government of the country fell into disorder, and the commerce through the Bolam Pass altogether ceased.

From 1872 to 1876 Lord Northbrook was Viceroy

of India, and one of his last acts before leaving was the appointment of Colonel Sandeman as our Envoy, with a view to mediate between the Khan and his subordinates, and which proved successful. The principal terms which were finally accepted by the Khan and his tribal chiefs were, that their foreign policy was to be under our guidance, and we were also to be the referee in case of internal disputes ; that the commerce of the Bolam was to be opened and protected, the annual subsidy hitherto granted to the Khan of 5,000*l.* being doubled to cover the necessary expenditure ; and, finally, that a British Agent with a suitable contingent should be established at Quetta. It is important to observe that the negotiations were conducted throughout in a spirit of conciliation, and that their beneficial results remain in force to the present day.

The policy pursued for many years on the Afghan frontier, although regulated by the same general principles as in Khelat, was not altogether so rapidly accomplished, or so entirely successful. The circumstances were in some degree different and less simple. In the first place the frontier was 800 miles long, and was inhabited by Afghan tribes, who were more predatory and intractable than the Beloochees ; they were not only independent of each other, but for the most part acknowledged no allegiance to the Ameer of Cabul. Border disputes therefore had to be settled

with individual chiefs; and no opportunity was offered for our mediation in internal feuds, or for joint agreement on external policy, as was so successfully accomplished by Sandeman in Beloochistan. There was no general federation with which we could enter into negotiation. As a consequence, we were compelled to maintain a large force and fortified posts along the frontier; and many punitive expeditions became necessary from time to time against lawless offending tribes. Still, on the whole, and considering the difficulties of the situation, the policy of conciliation, subsidies, and of non-interference with their internal affairs, gradually succeeded; raids once chronic became exceptional, and were dealt with rather as matters of frontier policy than of war.¹

It must also be remembered, as an additional complication, that in annexing the Punjaub, although it is essentially the country of the Sikhs, who are Hindoos, the inhabitants of the trans-Indus districts are for the most part what are termed Punjaubee Mussulmen, that is, Afghans, in race, religion and language.

From what has been said as to our dealings with the border tribes, it will be evident that while our difficulties were continuous and often serious, still,

¹ See Parliamentary Papers: *Afghanistan*, 1878, page 30, and *Beloochistan*, No. 3, 1878.

they were chiefly local ; and that the defence of the Empire on that frontier against foreign aggression depended in a great measure on our relations with the ruler of Afghanistan itself. When Dost Mahomed, after the great war, returned in 1843 to his former position as Ameer of that distracted country, it was hardly to be expected that, although acquiescing in his reinstatement, we should be regarded by him in a friendly light ; still, some years passed away without any important change in our relative positions, one way or the other.

In 1855, Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General, and a treaty was made with Dost Mahomed, by which both parties agreed to respect each other's territories. In January, 1857, a still more important one followed. We were then once more at war with Persia ; and at a meeting between Sir John Lawrence and the Ameer, an agreement was entered into that Dost Mahomed, acting in co-operation with us, should receive 10,000*l.* a month for military purposes, to continue during the war ; that English officers should reside in his country temporarily, to keep the Indian Government informed, but not to interfere with the administration, and that when peace ensued they should be withdrawn, and a native agent alone remain as our representative.¹ It is important to note that this

¹ In view of the strong objection to the presence of English officers in Afghanistan, Sir John Lawrence intimated to the Viceroy of India

friendly treaty was made at Peshawur, just before the great Mutiny, and that the Ameer, though urged by his people to attack us in our hour of danger, remained faithful, and would not allow them to cross the border.

Dost Mahomed died in June, 1863, and for some years after his death family feuds and intestine wars occurred as to his successor, during which we carefully abstained from interference, and were prepared to acknowledge the *de facto* ruler. Ultimately, in 1868, his son Shere Ali established his authority in Afghanistan, and was acknowledged accordingly. Lord Lawrence was then the Viceroy, and in a despatch to the Secretary of State expressed his views as regards the advances of Russia. After pointing out that they were now paramount in Central Asia, he suggested a mutual agreement as to our respective spheres and relations with the tribes and nations with whom we were now both in contact, and he went on to welcome the civilising effect of Russian government over the wild tribes of the Steppes, and pointed out that if Russia were assured of our loyal feeling in these matters, she would have no jealousy in respect of our alliance with the Afghans.

The Secretary of State (Sir Stafford Northcote)

that he had given an assurance to Dost Mahomed that it should not be enforced unless imperatively necessary;

replied 'that the conquests which Russia had made, and apparently is still making, in Central Asia, appear to be the natural result of the circumstances in which she finds herself placed, and to afford no ground whatever for representations indicative of suspicion or alarm on the part of this country.' It is a great misfortune that such sensible, conciliatory views did not continue to guide our policy in the events which a few years later led us into the second great war in Afghanistan.

Shere Ali did not inherit the great qualities of his father, and was also somewhat discontented that we had not abetted his cause during the internal troubles in Afghanistan. However, in 1869 he met Lord Mayo at Umballa, and after careful discussion it was agreed that we should abstain from sending British officers across the frontier and from interfering in Afghan affairs; that our desire was that a strong, friendly, and independent Government should be established in that country. It was further decided to give Shere Ali considerable pecuniary assistance, and presents of arms from time to time. The Ameer, while gratified at these results, wished us also to give a dynastic pledge as to his lineal descendants, which, however, was not acceded to. In 1873 Lord Northbrook was Viceroy of India, and a further conference took place at Simla with the Ameer's Prime Minister, chiefly as to the northern

Afghan frontier in Badakshan and Wakkan, which were at the time somewhat uncertain, and a matter of dispute with Russia.

This somewhat delicate question was, however, settled in a friendly manner by Lord Granville, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Prince Gortschakoff's final despatch to him on the subject was as follows:¹ 'The divergence which existed in our views was with regard to the frontiers assigned to the dominion of Shere Ali. The English Government includes within them Badakshan and Wakkan, which according to our views enjoyed a certain independence. Considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts; considering the greater facilities which the British Government possesses for collecting precise detail, and above all considering our wish not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it, we do not refuse to accept the boundary line laid down by England. We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all its influence with Shere Ali in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude, as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression or further conquest. This influence is indisputable. It is based, not only on the material and moral ascendancy of England, but

¹ *Central Asia*, 1873—c. 699.

also on the subsidies for which Shere Ali is indebted to her. Such being the case, we see in this assurance a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace.'

Prince Gortschakoff admitted more than once that the Emperor of Russia looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere of Russian influence, and within that of ours; at the same time, claiming similar independence for Russia in Central Asia.

During the next few years, subsequent to the Simla conference, Shere Ali, though he had received considerable assistance from us, both in money and arms, was not altogether satisfied, and one or two incidents occurred during that period which gave him umbrage. Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy in 1875, was not unaware of the somewhat cold and capricious spirit of the Ameer, but in writing to London he pointed out that Shere Ali's situation was difficult, not only from the risk of revolution at home, but also of attack from abroad, but that on the whole he was to be relied on.

A change, however, was coming over the scene, and our policy reverted from conciliation to compulsion. It was a critical period in the history of frontier policy, and demands careful consideration.

It must not be forgotten that although amongst those best qualified to judge the majority had long been opposed to advance and conquest in territories

beyond our North-West frontier, and entertained but little fear of Russian aggressive power, still there were others—men of long experience, who had filled high positions in India—who held different views; and it is probable that not only successive British Governments, but the public generally, who have no time for carefully weighing the diverse aspects of the subject, were influenced sometimes one way, sometimes another. In the many difficulties connected with our world-wide Empire this must always be more or less the case. For instance, the late Sir H. Rawlinson, a few years before the second Afghan war, took a very alarmist view of the progress of Russia, not only in Central Asia but also in Asia Minor. He considered that her advance from Orenburg was only part of one great scheme of invasion; and he averred that the conquest of the Caucasus had given her such a strong position that there was no military or physical obstacle to the continuous march of Russia from the Araxes to the Indus.¹ He described it as the unerring certainty of a law of nature. But, throughout, he ignores distances, blots out the mountains, deserts, and arid plains of Persia and Afghanistan, and takes no account of the warlike races who would bar the path. It requires a very large map to embrace all the details of this widespread strategy.

¹ Parliamentary Papers, *Afghanistan*, 1878.

Some account has already been given of the weakness, in a military point of view, of Russia in Central Asia, and of the distance of her scattered troops from the main resources of the Empire. But, in addition, it must be remembered that the mountains of Afghanistan also form a natural and enduring barrier against a further advance. The great Hindoo Koosh range, running all along the northern part of that country, forms indeed the real scientific frontier between the two Empires, the few passes over its snowy crests ranging from 12,000 to 18,000 feet high, and only open for a few months in the year.

Another supposed line of advance for a Russian army, namely by the Pamirs, has of late years been brought forward; but its main features are more discouraging than those of any other. This elevated region consists of a mass of bare snow-capped mountains attaining elevations of over 25,000 feet, intersected by plateaux almost as devoid of vegetation as the mountains themselves. The lakes are about 12,000 feet above the sea, the population is scanty, and consists chiefly of nomads in search of food and pasture during the short summer; so that although the Russians might, if unopposed, possibly move in small isolated detachments carrying their own food and munitions over the Pamirs, it would only be to lose themselves in the gorges of the Himalayas.

The conditions above mentioned are for the most part permanent. Russia may not, and probably has not, any intention of trying to invade and conquer India—but she has not the power, which is a far more important consideration.

To return to the position of affairs previous to the second Afghan war.¹ Early in 1875, Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General, received a despatch from the Government at home, pointing out that the information received from Afghanistan, not only in respect to internal intrigues but also as regards the influence of foreign Powers, was scanty, and not always trustworthy. He was, therefore, instructed to procure the assent of the Ameer to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat, and also at Candahar.

The Viceroy of India and his Council having consulted various experienced officers on the subject, replied in June, that in their opinion the present time and circumstances were unsuitable for taking the initiative. They pointed out that the Sirdars and many of the people of Afghanistan would strongly object, and that in the Ameer's somewhat insecure position he could not afford to disregard their feelings in the matter. They advised patience and conciliation.

¹ See *Afghanistan*, 1878, published by Secretary of State for India, p. 128 *et seq.*

In November 1875 a second despatch was received from England, reiterating the necessity of more complete information as to Afghanistan, especially in view of recent Russian advances in Central Asia; and the Viceroy was directed to send a Mission to Cabul without delay, to confer with the Ameer on Central Asia, and requesting that British officers should be placed on the frontier to watch the course of events.

The Government of India, in January 1876, again urged the undesirability of forcing the hands of the Ameer, and pointed out that his objections to English officers were not from a feeling of disloyalty, and that to force his hands was not desirable. They did not apprehend any desire of interference on the part of Russia, and they concluded by alluding to the careful conciliatory policy carried out by Lords Canning, Lawrence, and Mayo, as giving the best promise of peace, and satisfactory results in Afghanistan. Consequently they deprecated the proposed action by the Home Government in forcing British officers upon Shere Ali. In April 1876 Lord Northbrook quitted India, and was succeeded by Lord Lytton; and a further reply from Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, was received by the Viceroy. It reiterated that the Government at home considered our trans-frontier relations unsatisfactory; that permanent British Agencies should be established in

Afghanistan ; and that we were willing to afford the Ameer material support against unprovoked aggression, our object being to maintain a strong and friendly Power in that country. The despatch went on to say that should the Ameer decline to meet our request, he should be informed that he was isolating himself from us at his peril.

The next step was taken in May, when the Ameer was invited to receive a special Mission, which he politely declined. In October our native Agent at Cabul came to Simla and had an interview with Lord Lytton, who reiterated the demands of the British Government, pointing out that in the event of a refusal there was nothing to prevent our joining Russia in wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether, of which Shere Ali was duly informed. In January 1877 a final effort was made to come to terms, and Sir Lewis Pelly and the Afghan Prime Minister, Noor Mahomed, had a conference at Peshawur. The first, and indeed the only point discussed, was the demand that British representatives should reside in Afghanistan, which was a *sine qua non*. Noor Mahomed pathetically pleaded that Lords Lawrence, Mayo, and Northbrook, successive Viceroy, had all in turn promised that this should not be insisted on ; and he ended by saying that Shere Ali would rather perish than submit. It was evident that further discussion was useless, and

the conference was closed ; Noor Mahomed, who was ill, dying shortly afterwards. In March 1877 our native Agent at Cabul was withdrawn, and direct communication with Shere Ali ceased.

I have given the above *résumé* of the correspondence in 1875-77, and of the abortive efforts to induce the Ameer to comply with our demands, because it is evident that if he continued to resist compulsion must almost inevitably ensue. At about the same time, Quetta, in the Bolam, was occupied by a considerable British force, which was naturally regarded as a threat on Afghanistan. A concentration of troops also took place in the Northern Punjaub, and preparations were made for the construction of bridges over the Indus. All these were indications of coming war. It must also be noted that our relations with Russia in Europe were much strained at the time, so that probably the preparations in India were in some degree due to the apprehension of war in other parts of the world.

In the summer of 1878 a Russian Envoy arrived at Cabul, which under the circumstances is hardly to be wondered at. Some months however elapsed, and it was not until November 1878 that war was declared. Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, in his proclamation stated : 'That for ten years we had been friendly to Shere Ali ; had assisted him with money and arms ; and had secured for him formal recog-

nition of his northern frontier by Russia.' It went on to state, that in return he had requited us with active ill-will; had closed the passes and allowed British traders to be plundered; and had endeavoured to stir up religious hatred against us. It then pointed out that whilst refusing a British Mission he had received one from Russia; and ended by saying that we had no quarrel with the Afghans, but only with Shere Ali himself.

From official correspondence published subsequently¹ it appeared that in entering Afghanistan our chief object at the outset was to establish what was called a strategical triangle, by the occupation of Cabul, Ghuznee and Jellalabad; and it was stated that by holding this position, entrenched behind a rampart of mountains, we should have the power of debouching on the plains of the Oxus against Russia in Central Asia! 'It is difficult,' said Lord Lytton, 'to imagine a more commanding strategical position.' The events of the war, however, soon put an end to this somewhat fanciful strategy.

In November 1878 the British forces entered the country by three main routes, the Kyber, the Koorum, and the Bolam, and hard fighting at once ensued on the two northern ones. The results were immediate: Shere Ali fled northwards, and died soon after. His son, Yakoob Khan, assumed temporarily the position

¹ Parliamentary Papers, *Afghanistan*, 1881, No. 2.—c. 2811.

of Ameer, but in the convulsed state of the country he possessed little real power or authority. In May, 1879, he met the British authorities at Gundamuk, and after considerable discussion signed a treaty, the chief points of which were as follows:—The foreign affairs of Afghanistan were to be under our guidance; and we undertook to support the Ameer against foreign aggression; British agents were to reside in the country; the Koorum, Pisheen, and Sibi Valleys were assigned to the British Government; and finally, Yakoob Khan was to receive an annual subsidy of 60,000*l*.

So far, it would appear as if the campaign had at once realised the main objects of British policy; but tragic events rapidly followed, active hostilities were resumed, and the Treaty of Gundamuk became mere waste paper.

As a first result of the treaty, Sir Louis Cavagnari¹ was appointed our Envoy, and accompanied by a few officers and a small escort, arrived at Cabul in July, being received in a friendly manner by the Ameer; although influences adverse to his presence in the capital soon became apparent. Suddenly, on September 3, the British Residency was attacked by several Afghan regiments, and after a desperate resistance, Cavagnari and the whole of his officers and escort perished.

¹ *Afghanistan*, 1881, No. 1.

This deplorable event, of course, upset all previous arrangements, and led to an immediate resumption of hostilities. Our troops at once advanced and captured Cabul, Yakoob Khan voluntarily abdicating and becoming an exile in India. Ghuznee also was occupied shortly afterwards by our advance from Candahar.

The Government of India, in a despatch in January, 1880, pointed out that, in view of the complete change in the political situation, it was necessary, in the first place, fully to establish our military position in the country. They acknowledged that the hopes entertained of establishing a strong, friendly, and independent kingdom on our frontier had collapsed; and that Afghanistan had fallen to pieces at the first blow, its provinces being now disconnected and masterless. In view of these unexpected results, they went on to recommend the permanent separation of the provinces under separate rulers; and having regard to the special difficulties connected with Herat, advocated its being handed over to Persia!

This was indeed a policy of despair!

Lord Hartington, who had become Secretary of State for India, writing in May, 1880, summed up the situation as follows:—‘It appears that as the result of two successful campaigns, of the employment of an enormous force, and of the expenditure of

large sums of money, all that has yet been accomplished has been the disintegration of the State which it was desired to see strong, friendly and independent ; the assumption of fresh and unwelcome liabilities in regard to one of its provinces, and a condition of anarchy throughout the remainder of the country.'

Long and careful consideration was naturally given to the solution of the difficulty in which this country found itself owing to the untoward circumstances just related. Two important decisions were however ultimately arrived at :¹

1. That authority in Afghanistan, and the unity of its provinces, should as far as possible be restored by the appointment of a new Ameer ; and Abdul Rahman, a nephew of Shere Ali, who had been for twelve years an exile in Bokhara, was invited to Cabul, and was supported by us in assuming the title.

The chief conditions were, that his foreign policy was to be under our guidance, that no English officers were to reside as our representatives in Afghanistan, and that he was to receive a subsidy.

2. That the British troops should be withdrawn as soon as the pacification of the country would permit. This decision was recommended not only by the Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon, but by the

¹ *Afghanistan*, 1881, No. 1.

higher officers who had held command during the war. Sir Donald Stewart, who was in chief command, and Sir Frederick Roberts, both concurred in our withdrawal from the country ; the Kyber Pass was to be held by subsidised tribes, and the Koorum Valley to be altogether abandoned ; the independence of the tribes being in each case recognised. Sir John Watson, who was in command in that valley, pointed out that as a route from India into Afghanistan it was practically useless. As a further argument in favour of withdrawal, it may be well to allude to the fact that the men of our native regiments were sick of serving in Afghanistan, far away from their homes, and that it would be impolitic to keep them there.

Some differences of opinion existed as to whether we should relinquish possession of Candahar ; but as it was 400 miles from the Indus, in a foreign country, and as our remaining there would not only be hateful to the Afghans, but in a military sense would be dangerous and costly, its final abandonment was decided on ; the valley of Pisheen, between Candahar and Quetta, being alone retained by the British Government.

So ended the great war of 1878-80. At its close we had over 70,000 men in Afghanistan, or on the border in reserve ; and even then we really only held the territory within range of our guns. The whole

country had been disintegrated and was in anarchy ; whilst the total cost of the war exceeded twenty millions sterling, being about the same amount as had been expended in the former great war of 1839-41.

The military operations in themselves had been conducted throughout with great skill in a most difficult country, and the troops, both British and Native, had proved themselves admirable soldiers ; but as regards the policy which led us into war, it appears to have been as unjust in principle as it was unfortunate in result. The facts, however, speak for themselves.

CHAPTER III

FRONTIER POLICY SINCE SECOND AFGHAN WAR,
INCLUDING EXPEDITION TO CHITRAL

Further Advance of Russia—Merv Occupied—Sir West Ridgeway's Frontier Commission of 1885—The Durand Agreement with Abdul Rahman—The Chitral Expedition of 1895: its Results—Sudden Outbreak of Frontier Tribes, 1897.

THE reaction after the war naturally inclined the authorities in both countries to leave frontier policy alone, at all events for the time. Our professed object for years had been to make Afghanistan strong, friendly, and independent. The first had certainly not been accomplished, and the other two were doubtful. Still, by patience, conciliation, and subsidies, we might hope in the course of time that the wounds we had inflicted would gradually be healed, and a more stable condition ensue. For a short period it was so; but then the old bugbear of Russian advance over the dreary wastes of Central Asia again supervened, and exercised its malign influence on our policy.

In 1881 and the following years, Russia, whilst

completing her conquests, and improving her communications in the south-western part of Central Asia, became involved in somewhat prolonged hostilities with the Tekke-Turcomans, ending in their subjugation, and in the occupation of the long, desolate strip of country extending eastwards from the Caspian, which had hitherto been independent. A railway was gradually constructed from the vicinity of Kras-novodsk, on the Caspian, towards Samarcand. Merv, formerly a city of importance, but of late a mere village in the desert, was also occupied. These acquisitions of Russia, accomplished in districts far removed from India, would not appear to involve any special consideration on our part; but as the southern frontiers of Russia thus became conterminous for a long distance with Northern Persia, and also with some districts of Afghanistan, their new position was regarded as possibly involving designs against our Indian Empire, and remonstrances were made by us, more especially as regards the occupation of Merv.¹

In a strategical point of view the question would not appear to be of much importance, and would probably have dropped; but early in 1885 the Russians attacked and drove the Afghan troops out of Penjdeh, a small, hitherto almost unknown village in the desert. It was a high-handed measure, and

¹ *Central Asia*, No. 2, 1885.

the relations between the two Governments, British and Russian, which were already rather strained, became critical, and war at one moment appeared to be almost inevitable.

It is not necessary, nor would it be desirable, now to recapitulate the details of this serious crisis; because, happily, owing to the prudence exercised by both Governments, the danger gradually passed away, a Joint Commission being agreed on, to meet on the frontier, and to report as to its delimitation. It may, however, be as well to mention that it seems rather doubtful whether Penjdeh at the time absolutely belonged to Afghanistan. Frontiers in the East are proverbially uncertain and shifting, and in our own official maps, not very long before the occurrences in question, it was marked as outside the Afghan border. Colonel Stewart, reporting in 1884 on the northern frontier of Afghanistan, and alluding to Penjdeh, said that it was inhabited by Turcomans, and he thus described the position: 'The state of affairs seems to have been that the Turcomans acknowledged that they were squatting on Afghan land, and were liable to pay taxes, and each year they paid something as an acknowledgment of Afghan rights; but so long as this was done, the Afghans looked upon them as a protection against the Tekke further north, and left them very much to themselves.'

The appointment of a Joint Commission of Russian and British officers to delimit the northern frontiers of Afghanistan proved of great value, not only in gaining information regarding districts hitherto but little known, but also because its conjoint work tended to engender feelings of respect and goodwill between the two nations concerned.

Its labours commenced in the autumn of 1885, and the report of Sir West Ridgeway, the British Commissioner, is full of interest and encouragement. In an article in the 'Nineteenth Century' of October, 1887, on the completion of his work, he gives some details of the country, and also of the position of Russia in Central Asia, which are worth quoting. As to the Afghan border he says: 'The three or four hundred miles of country through which the new north-western frontier of Afghanistan runs is a sandy, treeless, waterless desert, except where it is traversed from south to north by the Heri-Rood, the Murghab and the Oxus. The only cultivable ground is on the banks of these rivers ; but in spring time, after the winter snows have melted, the intervening plains afford good grazing for sheep.' But perhaps the most important part of his article is his view of the position of Russia in Central Asia: 'If any Russian general,' he writes, 'were so reckless as to attempt the invasion of India, and relying on the single line of lightly constructed rails which connects the Caspian

with the Oxus, and which are liable in summer to be blocked by the moving sands of the desert, and in winter by the falling snows of Heaven—if, relying on this frail and precarious base, he were to move an army through the barren plains bordering the Oxus, and leaving in his rear the various hostile and excited races of Central Asia, he were to cross the difficult passes of the Hindoo Koosh, and entangle his army in the barren mountain homes of the fanatical and treacherous Afghan, then indeed our fortunate generals may well congratulate themselves that the Lord has delivered the enemy into their hand. . . .’

Whilst, however, his conclusions as to the military weakness of Russia in that part of the world are clear and decisive enough, he at the same time does full justice to the good work which she is carrying out in that vast area. He says: ‘Hitherto Russia’s advance in Central Asia has been the triumph of civilisation. Wherever she has planted her flag slavery has ceased to exist. This was keenly brought home to us in the course of our travels. For hundreds of miles before we reached Herat we found the country desolated and depopulated by Turcoman raids, while even in the Herat valley we continually came across the fathers and brothers of men who had been carried off from their peaceful fields by man-stealing Turcomans, and sold into slavery many hundred miles away. All this has ceased since the

Russian occupation of Merv ; the cruel slave trade has been stamped out. . . .’

Lord Salisbury, speaking in 1887, at the conclusion of the frontier delimitation, happily described the situation as follows : ‘I value the settlement for this reason—not that I attach much importance to the square miles of desert land with which we have been dealing, and which probably after ten generations of mankind will not yield the slightest value to any human being : but the settlement indicates on both sides that spirit which in the two Governments is consistent with continued peace. There is abundant room for both Governments, if they would only think so. . . .’ What a pity that some statesman could not have persuaded England to that effect fifty years before !

During the next few years no events of special importance occurred to affect our general frontier policy in India, so far as Russia and Afghanistan proper are concerned. The ample information we now possess of the relative power and position of each country, and the experience gained in bygone wars, enable us to form a correct judgment of the great strength of our Empire in the East ; and it is to be hoped that in the future we shall hear less of those alarmist views which have so frequently led us into erroneous policy and untoward expeditions.

Russia and England are now, happily, on friendly

terms, and Abdul Rahman, the Ameer of Cabul, although his position is difficult in the midst of a turbulent people, has proved himself a loyal neighbour.

But another cloud has appeared on the horizon, and our troubles with the intervening frontier tribes are now apparently worse than ever. From accounts already given of those who dwell along the border, it is evident that although our differences with them, during past years, have been frequent and often serious, they have been more or less of a local character. Troublesome as our neighbours have proved, still they have no power of inflicting serious injury, or of endangering our rule. Under these circumstances, the best policy, whilst firmly repressing their predatory instincts, is to leave them alone.

In the absence of full official information as to the origin of recent difficulties, which have culminated in the present frontier war, it is only possible to speak in general terms. It may be mentioned, in the first place, that owing to the uncertain line of demarcation between the territories of the Ameer of Cabul and those of his independent tribal neighbours, constant feuds and local hostilities occurred from time to time in the mountains; and with a view of defining their respective spheres, the Government of India, in 1893, sent a Mission to Cabul for the purpose. This in itself would appear to have been a reasonable

step ; and the 'Durand Agreement' which ensued (but which has not been published) would, it was hoped, tend to a cessation of conflicts between the Ameer's subjects and their neighbours. But there is a further aspect of the question. So far as is known, not only were the respective borders laid down, but it is understood that in many cases the intervening tribes are now assumed to be what is termed 'within the sphere of British influence.' In maps recently published, presumably with some authority, vast mountainous districts are now included in this somewhat mysterious phrase. For instance, the ~~Keorum~~ Valley, the Samana Range, the countries of the ~~Afridis~~ and the ~~Mohmands~~, the districts of Chitral, Bajour, Dir, Swat, Bonair, and others, are all included within it ; and in many instances fortified positions, occupied by British troops, are to be found either within or along their borders.

Surely this opens out a wide question, and it would be interesting to know whether, in the discussions at Cabul, the chiefs of the intervening tribes were present, and whether they acquiesced, not only in the new boundaries, but also in being included as within our sphere of influence ? It is evident it should have been a tripartite, and not a dual, agreement. It is perfectly well known, and has been proved by long experience, that these

frontier tribes value their independence and liberties beyond everything else, and will not submit peacefully to interference ; and if they were not consulted in the arrangements just described, we may begin to trace the origin of the present crisis.

Although, as I have explained, we are unable, from want of official information, to deal fully with the larger topic of recent border policy, we have, at all events, ample details as regards the Chitral question in the Parliamentary Papers published¹ in 1895. It appears that so long ago as 1876 the ruler of Chitral voluntarily tendered his allegiance to the Maharajah of Cashmere, and endeavoured, but without success, to persuade the neighbouring chiefs of Swat, Bajour, and Dir, to follow his example. Now Chitral and Cashmere are not only far apart, but are separated by lofty mountain ranges, inhabited by other tribes, so that this sudden offer of vassalage seems rather inexplicable. It transpired, however, a few years afterwards, that his real motive in seeking the friendship of Cashmere was due to his fear of aggression by the Ameer of Cabul.²

The Government of India at the time encouraged this somewhat sentimental friendship, and in order to obtain influence over the intervening tribes established a fort at Gilgit, in an almost inaccessible position, not far from the snowy crests of the Hindoo

¹ *North-West Frontier, Chitral*, 1895.

² *Ibid.* page 46.

Koosh. The position, however, proved to be costly, and also dangerous from unfriendly neighbours, and, as after three years' experience no special object was attained, it was withdrawn in 1881.

In 1889 the old fears of possible Russian aggression again revived, and Gilgit was reoccupied with a strong detachment of Cashmere troops, accompanied by several English officers. The Government of India pointed out that the development of Russian military resources in Asia rendered it necessary to watch the passes over the mountains, in order to prevent what was called a *coup de main* from the north. In short, they dreaded the march of a Russian army over the Pamirs and the Hindoo Koosh—a region where Nature has constructed for us perhaps one of the most formidable frontiers in the world.

Friendship with the ruler of Chitral was also cultivated. He was given an annual subsidy, and a present of 500 Sniders; being visited also by English officers. It was even contemplated at the time to construct a direct road from his capital to our frontier near Peshawur; but as he was suspicious, and as his neighbours in Swat, Bajour, and others would probably have objected, the suggestion was happily postponed.

In October 1892 the ruler of Chitral died, and after the usual family contests and intrigues, Nizam

ul-Mulk, his son, established his authority in the country.

In January, 1893, Dr. Robertson arrived at Chitral as our representative, accompanied by two officers and fifty Sikhs. Although he was received in a friendly manner by the new ruler, his account of the state of affairs in April was discouraging and ominous. He wrote : ' We seem to be on a volcano here. Matters are no longer improving ; the atmosphere of Chitral is one of conspiracy and intrigue.' A few weeks later he gave a more cheerful account, and although he described the people as fickle, he considered that Englishmen were safe. It became evident, however, that the Nizam-ul-Mulk was weak and unpopular, and Dr. Robertson described the country as ' in a distracted state, and torn by factions.'

The reports of our Agent, in short, would seem to prove that he was in a false and dangerous position, with a small escort, far away in the mountains, about 200 miles from our frontier.

In January, 1895, the Nizam was murdered by his brother, and the whole country at once again fell into anarchy. Dr. Robertson, who had been temporarily absent, but had returned in February, was besieged in a fort, with his escort, which, however, had been increased to about 290 men. The crisis had come at last, and there was no time to spare.

A strong force under Sir Robert Low was assembled at Peshawur, and crossed the frontier on April 1. It must be pointed out that, in proceeding to Chitral, the British troops had necessarily to pass through a difficult mountainous country inhabited by independent tribes; and the Government of India issued a proclamation in which they pointed out that their sole object 'is to put an end to the present and to prevent any future unlawful aggression on Chitral territory, and that as soon as this object has been attained the force would be withdrawn.' The proclamation went on to say, that the Government 'have no intention of permanently occupying any territory through which Mura Khan's misconduct may now force them to pass, or of interfering with the independence of the tribes.'

The military operations were conducted with great skill and rapidity, and Dr. Robertson's small garrison, which at one time had been hard pressed, was saved: a small force under Colonel Kelly, which had left Gilgit, having by a daring and successful march arrived just before the main body from Peshawur.

The short campaign having thus accomplished its object, the gradual withdrawal of the British troops in accordance with the proclamation would seem to have been a natural sequence. In the weak, distracted state of the country, and in the assumed necessity of not losing our influence in those distant

regions, the Government of India, however, considered that a road from our frontier to Chitral should be made, and certain positions retained in order to guard it. This vital question having been carefully considered at home, the Secretary of State for India, on June 13, 1895, telegraphed to the Viceroy that her Majesty's Government regretted they were unable to concur in the proposal. He went on to say that no 'military force or European Agent shall be kept at Chitral; that Chitral should not be fortified; and that no road shall be made between Peshawur and Chitral.' He added that all positions beyond our frontier should be evacuated as speedily as circumstances allowed.

It so happened that within a few days of this important decision a change of Government occurred at home, and the question was reconsidered; and on August 9, fresh instructions were telegraphed to India, by which it was ordered that British troops should be stationed at the Malakund Pass, leading into Swat, and that other posts up to, and including, Chitral, should also be held, and a road made through the country. In short the previous decision was entirely reversed.

Before going further it may be as well to point out that this is no mere question between one political party and another. It goes far beyond that, and we may feel assured that in considering the subject,

both Governments were actuated by a desire to do what was considered best in the interests of the Indian Empire.

Still, it is I think impossible not to regard the ultimate decision as very unfortunate, and as likely to lead to serious consequences. In a mere military point of view, it was a repetition of the policy pursued of recent years of establishing isolated military posts in countries belonging to others, or in their vicinity; inevitably tending to aggravate the tribes, and which in time of trouble, instead of increasing our strength, are and have been the cause of anxiety to ourselves. Therefore, not only as a matter of policy, but in a purely military sense, the arrangement was dangerous.

I would further observe that many officers, both civil and military, men of the highest character and long experience in the Punjaub and its borders, did not hesitate to express their opinions at the time, that retribution would speedily follow; and their anticipations appear now to have been verified. Suddenly, not many weeks ago, the people of Swat, who were said to be friendly, violently attacked our position on the Malakund, losing, it is said, 3,000 men in the attempt; and also nearly captured a fortified post a few miles distant at Chakdara. Not only that, but this unexpected outbreak was followed by hostilities on the part of the tribes in Bajour, and

by the Mohmands north of Peshawar, and also by the Afridis, who, subsidised by us, had for years guarded the celebrated Kyber. Again, the tribes of the Samana range, and others to the west of Kohat, rose in arms; and a very large force of British troops had to be pushed forward in all haste to quell this great combined attack on the part of our neighbours. General Sir Neville Chamberlain, perhaps the greatest living authority on frontier questions, has written quite recently, pointing out that never previously had there been a semblance of unity of action amongst the different tribesmen.¹

There surely must have been some very strong feeling of resentment and injustice which brought so many tribesmen for the first time to combine in opposition to what they evidently considered an invasion of their country. As regards the Afridis, who are spoken of as treacherous and faithless, it must be borne in mind that in 1881 we specially recognised their independence,² and have ever since subsidised them for the special purpose of guarding the commerce through the Kyber; a duty which they have faithfully carried out until the present summer. Lord Lytton, who was Viceroy when the arrangement was proposed at the end of the war, wrote in 1880 ³—‘I sincerely hope that the Govern-

¹ *Saturday Review*, 30th Oct. 1897.

² *Afghanistan* No. 1, 1881, page 57.

³ *Ibid.* page 62.

ment of India will not be easily persuaded to keep troops permanently stationed in the Kyber. I feel little doubt that such a course would tend rather to cause trouble than to keep order. Small bodies of troops would be a constant provocation to attack ; large bodies would die like flies. . . . '

'I believe that the Pass tribes themselves, if properly managed, will prove the best guardians of the Pass, and be able, as well as willing, to keep it open for us, if we make it worth their while to do so. . . . '

Many of these very men, and those of other tribes on the frontier, have for years enlisted in our ranks, and have proved to be good soldiers. I repeat that some strong cause must have influenced them suddenly to break out into war.

Until the present military operations have been brought to a close, and until full official information has been given of the circumstances which have led to them, it is not possible to pronounce a final judgment ; still, it seems to me, that we have strong grounds for believing that the border policy of late years has in many instances been too aggressive and regardless of the rights of the tribes ; and that the course finally pursued of the retention of fortified posts through Swat and Bajour to Chitral, has been the ultimate cause which has excited the people against

us, and produced so great and costly a border war. It must also not be forgotten, that even now we are merely on the fringe, as it were, of the question ; and that if we persist in forcing ourselves forward, we shall have many a costly campaign to undertake far away in distant, little-known regions, more difficult and more inaccessible even than those in which we now find ourselves.

On the whole it appears to me that we should as far as possible withdraw our isolated posts, so many of which are either within the tribal country or along its borders. It is sometimes argued that any withdrawal on our part would have a demoralising effect on the tribes, who would ascribe our retirement to inability to maintain our positions.¹ The best reply will perhaps be to quote the words of Lord Hartington, when under similar circumstances it was decided in 1881 to retire from Candahar. He said :² ‘The moral effect of a scrupulous adherence to declarations which have been made, and a striking and convincing proof given to the people and princes of India that the British Government have no desire for further annexation of territory, could not fail to produce a most salutary effect, in removing the apprehensions, and strengthening the attachment of

¹ *Chitral*, 1895, page 62.

² *Afghanistan*, No. 1, 1881, page 92.

our native allies throughout India, and on our frontiers. . . .’

These remarks may now be brought to a close. My object throughout has been to give an historical summary of the various wars and expeditions in which we have been engaged during the present century on the North-West frontier of India; and of the causes which have led to them. My observations are founded on Parliamentary official papers, and on other works of authority; and I hope they may prove useful to the public, who have not, as a rule time to study the intricate details of this difficult subject. I have endeavoured to prove that the tribes on the frontier, and the people of Afghanistan, have no real power of injuring our position in India; and turbulent as they may be, a policy of patience, conciliation, and subsidies, is far more likely to attain our object than incessant costly expeditions into their mountains. Our influence over them is already great, and is increasing year by year. By carefully maintaining the principles I have sketched out, we shall gradually obtain their friendship, and also their support, should other dangers ever threaten our dominions.

We are the rulers of a great Empire in the East, with its heavy duties and responsibilities, and in devoting ourselves to the welfare of the millions

under our sway, and in developing the resources of the country, we shall do far more for the happiness of the people and the security of the Empire than by squandering our finances in constant expeditions beyond its borders.

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THE INDIAN FRONTIER QUESTION.

A

S P E E C H

DELIVERED BY THE

RIGHT HON. SIR

HENRY FOWLER, G.C.S.I., M.P.,

AT WOLVERHAMPTON,

ON NOVEMBER 20th, 1897.

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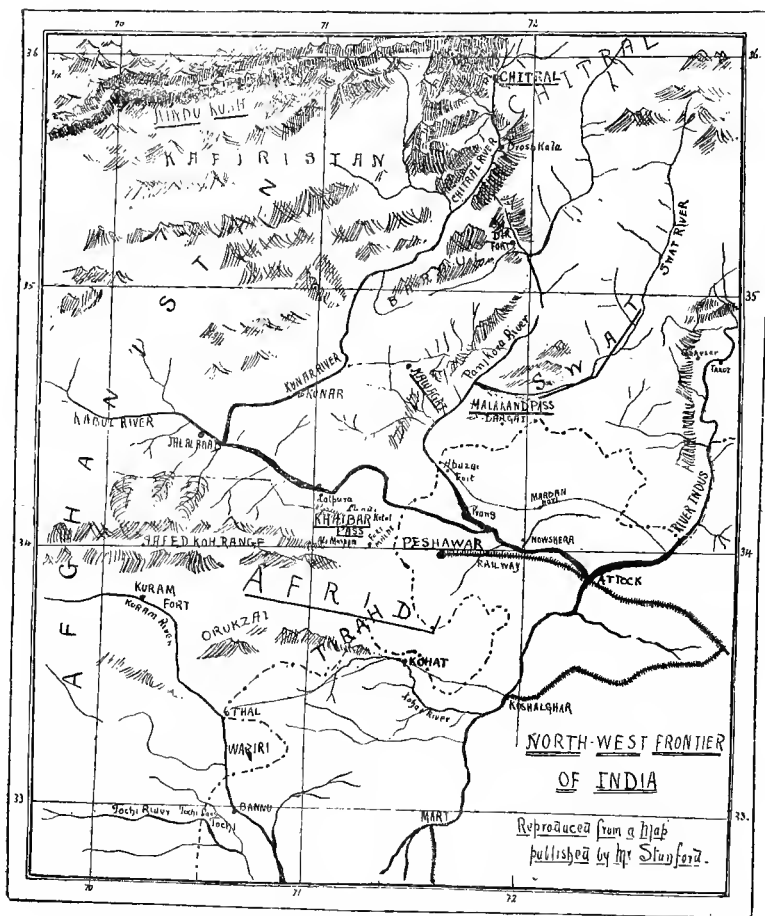
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———— Railways

*The places underlined are those mentioned in
SIR HENRY FOWLER'S Speech.*

THE INDIAN FRONTIER QUESTION.

SIR HENRY H. FOWLER, speaking at Wolverhampton, on November 20th, after referring to the success of the Progressives at the recent Wolverhampton School Board election, to the incidents of the last session, and to the recent by-elections, said:—There are many grave questions which are occupying public attention, and in the foremost place is the conflict on the North-West frontier of India. The nation has been thrilled with the records of heroic courage which have upheld the proud traditions of the British Army, and displayed the unflinching loyalty of those Indian troops, who rank among the bravest soldiers in the service of the Queen. But the strength and unanimity of this national feeling necessitates some reconsideration of the policy with which this brilliant campaign is involved. The office which I held in the late Government requires that I should take some share—and it is no small share—of the responsibility for the action which their successors have reversed and censured. In this controversy, as in all controversies, the first step is to ascertain the facts; and as many of the criticisms upon the conduct of my colleagues and myself ignore or misrepresent both facts and dates, I am bound, as briefly as I can, to go into some detail in telling you the story of the events which preceded the outbreak which it is now the duty of the Indian Government to suppress.

The Rescue of the Chitral Garrison.

On January 1st, 1895, the native ruler of Chitral was assassinated by order of his brother. A British officer representing the Government of India was in Chitral with a small escort when the murder took place, and to him the usurper sent a deputation asking to be recognised as his brother's successor. The reply was that the question would be referred to the Government of India, whose orders must be awaited. In the meantime a detachment of soldiers was sent to Chitral, and Mr. (now Sir George) Robertson, who was the Political Agent at headquarters, started for Chitral. He arrived on February 1st. In the interval a native chief, who was, no doubt, an accomplice in the conspiracy, invaded the State of Chitral with a large force. Sir

George Robertson took up his position in the fort, and the troops accompanying him made up a garrison of nearly 400 men. Further fighting took place, and early in March Sir George and his garrison were besieged. On March 8th I was informed of the necessity of an expedition to rescue Robertson. I may say, in passing, that to my mind the first consideration was to rescue the men who were besieged. They were there representing their Queen and country, and we were bound, at all cost, to rescue them. On that day I telegraphed to the Government of India authorising them to take any action that they might deem necessary to secure the safety of the British force. That Government, with admirable promptitude, at once mobilised a large army—some 15,000 men—and prepared to cross the frontier. Chitral, a country about the size of Wales, is described by Captain Younghusband, who is intimately acquainted with the locality, as a “sea of mountains, practically bare, except in the lower part, and it is only in small patches at the very bottom of the narrow valleys that any cultivation at all can be found.” The State is bounded in the main by the countries inhabited by some of the tribes with whom we are now so sadly familiar. The fort of Chitral is nearly 200 miles from Peshawar, and the army intended to relieve the fort had to march through the territory held by these independent tribes. It was, therefore, of the first importance, not only to avoid conflict with them, but, if possible, to secure their friendly co-operation.

The Chitral Proclamation and its Interpretation.

To attain this object the proclamation, about which so much controversy has raged, was issued in the middle of March. It stated, first, that notice had been given to the chief of the besieging army that unless he retired from Chitral by April 1st the Government would use force to compel him; second, that the sole object of the Government was to put an end to the present, and to prevent any future, unlawful aggression on Chitral territory; third, that, as soon as that object had been attained, the force would be withdrawn; fourth, that the Government had no intention of permanently occupying any territory through which they passed, or of interfering with the independence of the tribes; and, fifth, that they would scrupulously avoid any acts of hostility towards the tribesmen so long as they on their part refrained from attacking or impeding in any way the march of the troops. I was aware of the purport of this proclamation, but I did not receive the text until April 2nd. Without discussing at present the effect of this proclamation, it is not unimportant to consider what it was then understood to mean. In the *Times* of March 23rd their Correspondent describes the proclamation as stating “that we do not intend to annex any territory, but merely to compel the invading chief to evacuate Chitral.” A few days later, on March 28th, Mr. George Curzon, who had been Under-Secretary of State for India in Lord Salisbury’s Administration, and whose authority on all Eastern questions is exceptionally high, wrote to the *Times* on the situation in Chitral, and in that

letter he says :—"I see that the Indian Government have issued a proclamation to the tribes to say that as soon as they have attained their object in Chitral the British force will be withdrawn, and that there is no intention of occupying the intervening territory. Of course this may be technically true ; but if this proclamation means, as it will undoubtedly be interpreted to mean, that, having opened up the essential and inevitable route to Chitral, we are going to allow it again to be closed, it will be difficult to find words in which to describe the melancholy fatuity of such a decision,"—a perfectly fair criticism from Mr. Curzon's point of view, but you see what it involves. The Indian Government, in their despatch dated April 17th, state that "a proclamation was issued to the people of Swat and others on the Peshawar frontier announcing the intention and object of the Government, assuring them that we did not intend to permanently occupy any territory through which the force might pass, or interfere with the independence of the tribes, and promising friendly treatment to all those who did not oppose the march of the troops." The same despatch further states that after the issue of the proclamation the authorities at once commenced negotiations with the Swatis and other tribes concerned, and explained the situation to them ; that, an agent having learnt that some of the other tribes had been recalled to their homes, "he was authorised to explain to the people the purport of the proclamation," and that one of the principal chiefs had, "on the receipt of the proclamation, openly declared himself a friend of the Government." Thus we have from the "Press, from the official Opposition, through the representative in the House of Commons of the India Office in the preceding Government, from the Government of India, and from the action of some of the tribesmen, what was the general impression of the meaning of the proclamation. I need not recall the brilliant story of the defence and relief of Chitral ; on that there is no conflict of opinion. The Englishmen of to-day and the Englishmen of the future will never forget the unselfish heroism which distinguished Sir George Robertson and his comrades during that memorable siege, nor the splendid courage which characterised the advance from Peshawar and the march from Gilgit.

Conflicting Policies.

The controversy arises as to the conflicting policies which followed the complete success of the military expedition. And for those policies the two Cabinets which in turn adopted them are alone responsible. It was the duty of the Government of India to advise the Home Government on all the aspects, both civil and military, of the grave and difficult questions which the state of affairs at Chitral had raised. It was the duty of the Home Government to treat that advice with the greatest consideration, to appreciate the weighty arguments which had influenced the eminent men of whom the Government of India was composed, but the decision and responsibility rested, and solely rested, with the Cabinet of the Queen.

The Policy of the Late Government.

Our policy with respect to Chitral was not a new question. It had occupied the attention of Lord Cross, Lord Kimberley, and myself, and the existing arrangements were temporary. Aware of this I telegraphed to the Viceroy on March 30th, that as soon as the present trouble was over our policy with regard to Chitral and neighbourhood would have to be fully and carefully reconsidered in the light of recent events and that our hands must be kept perfectly free. "I hope," I added, "that you will take care that nothing is said or done to commit the Government either way with regard to making new roads or retention of posts now occupied or occupation of new posts." On April 19th, the day Chitral was relieved, I asked by telegram for the advice of the Indian Government on the strategical and political importance of Chitral, and for their suggestions as to the course to be adopted in the future. This telegram was crossed by a telegram to me from India, and in that telegram the Viceroy stated that, in the opinion of the Indian Government, the military occupation of Chitral, supported by a road to Peshawar, was a matter of first importance, and he added :—"We are unanimous in asking your permission to enter into negotiations with the tribes, with the view to obtaining their consent to the opening up of this road when, in our opinion, the opportunity arises in connection with General Low's advance, and in thinking loss of this opportunity would be a serious mistake." It may give you some idea of the length and character of the proposed road if I say that, if on the map Birmingham stood for Peshawar, Carlisle would represent Chitral and the Alps the intervening country. On April 20th the Viceroy telegraphed, in reply to my telegram which had been crossed, that his telegram which I have just quoted expressed the views of the Indian Government as to the importance of Chitral, but that without entering into negotiations with intervening tribes he could not answer as to the extent of political difficulties or the cost of the road. To this I replied that I had no objection to his sounding the tribes as to the terms and conditions on which they would consent to opening and maintaining a road from Peshawar to Chitral should this road be hereafter decided on, but I further stated that I did not wish to be committed to any policy until her Majesty's Government had fully considered the detailed views and arguments of the Indian Government with respect to that policy. On May 5th the Indian Government sent their despatch containing those views and arguments. I was advised by telegraph as to the effect of the despatch, and also of the desire of the Indian Government that the decision of the Cabinet should be postponed until after the arrival of the despatch and of its accompanying documents.

The Views of the Indian Government.

The despatch reached me about the end of May—I think the 27th or 28th. It was a masterly and lucid reply to my request for the detailed views of the Indian Government upon the questions I had

submitted for their consideration. The situation with its dangers was clearly set forth, and very powerful arguments were urged in favour of the policy advocated. That policy was the military occupation of the Chitral valley and the construction of the road from Peshawar. With respect to the road, the despatch stated the difficulties to be—first, that the expense might be prohibitive; secondly, that if the opening of the road meant subduing the tribes and holding the line by force it would not only involve great cost, but many embarrassing complications. The Indian Government added that they were not convinced that these difficulties would occur. They stated that the expedition had not aroused a general religious war, that the hostility of the tribes had been exaggerated, that the leading men were amenable to arguments of utility, that the fanatical Mahomedan influence was less strong than it was believed to be, and that it might be possible to come to arrangements with the intervening tribes which, backed by force, would be adequate to keep open a route by which troops and supplies could be sent up to Chitral. They added that without opening negotiations, they could not say what chance there really was of making satisfactory and permanent amicable arrangements, and that it would be impossible, under existing circumstances, to do more than make indirect inquiries until they were informed of the decision of her Majesty's Government on the whole policy to be adopted in Chitral. The despatch concludes with the statement that the Indian Government were fully conscious that the course which they recommended might involve the Government in an expense which the finances of India could ill afford and in an increase of responsibilities with the tribes on the North-West Frontier which they would fain avoid. The late Government have been blamed for unnecessary delay in arriving at their decision, and they have been accused of acting with rash precipitation. Both these inconsistent charges are unfounded. The question was not one to be decided, as one of my critics said, "in 24 hours." It required consultation with the highest expert authorities, both military and civil, and it demanded the fullest consideration by the Government, with whom the responsibility of the decision rested. Both these conditions were fulfilled.

Military Opinion.

The question was primarily a military one—viz., whether Chitral was of such strategical importance as to be essential as a safeguard from invasion. The commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, Sir George White, and the military member of the Indian Government, Sir Henry Brackenbury, were both of opinion that it was, and in that view they were supported by the great authority of Lord Roberts. On the other hand, distinguished Indian generals of equal weight were of a contrary opinion. Lord Rosebery's Government felt it to be their duty to avail themselves of the best military advice they could obtain. And I say now, as I have already said in the House of Commons, that, so far as military considerations were concerned, our

policy was settled upon the advice of some of the most eminent military authorities in the Empire. Their advice and its reasons could not be published, but I may state the effect of their unanimous opinion was that the gigantic natural defences of the North-West Frontier would not be strengthened by the military occupation of Chitral, that it was not a place of importance either as a base for military reserves or as a base for military operations, that to lock up troops in Chitral or in the Chitral Valley would be a blunder, and that the construction of a military road from Peshawar to Chitral would be an advantage to an invading force and a disadvantage to a defending force. There were many other confidential considerations of a technical and detailed character to which I cannot refer, but which strengthened the opinion of our military advisers.

The "Consent" of the Tribes.

The occupation of Chitral depended upon opening and maintaining the road, and that, as we considered, depended upon obtaining the consent of the tribes. Civilian experts, Indian statesmen with long experience on the frontier and of the tribes, were of opinion that to make the road under arrangements with the tribes would lead sooner or later to a control over the whole of the country through which it passed—that a policy of insisting upon open roads and respecting at the same time the independence of the tribes was impossible—that the roads could not be effectually kept open and protected for any length of time by merely tribal arrangements, but would have to be protected throughout by regular troops—and that the construction and holding of the road meant the practical subjection and annexation of the tribes and their territory between Peshawar and Chitral. After careful consideration it appeared to us that the construction and defence of the road with the consent of the tribes would be a dangerous policy, and even if such arrangements could be made they could not be relied on as of practical or permanent value. We were further of opinion that to construct the road without those arrangements would be a violation of the proclamation on the faith of which several of the tribes did not combine against and oppose our march through their territories.

The Liberal Government's Decision.

Having regard to all the considerations which I have briefly summarised, the late Government came to the conclusion that they would not be justified in accepting the proposals contained in the despatch, and they decided that no military force or European Agent should be kept at Chitral, that the road should not be made, and that the army which had effected the relief operations should return to British territory as speedily as circumstances would allow, the dates and details being left to the discretion of the Indian Government. That decision was telegraphed to the Viceroy on June 13th. The next day he replied that, while deeply regretting, he loyally accepted our

decision, and a few days later he telegraphed the proposals of the Indian Government for carrying out our policy. On the day on which that telegram arrived we tendered our resignation to her Majesty.

Mr. Balfour's Criticisms.

I have now given you a complete and, as I believe and intend, an impartial account of the action of my colleagues and myself. The leader of the House of Commons has severely attacked not only our policy but our personal conduct, and I should be wanting in my duty to my colleagues and myself if I did not take some notice of the charges which he has brought against us. He alleges that no communication was ever made to Lord Elgin that the opinion was entertained that the policy advocated by the despatch of May 8th was inconsistent with the terms of the proclamation. He emphasizes this charge by insinuating that Lord Rosebery and myself many weeks after we left office invented the idea of a breach of the proclamation, and that our own colleagues (he mentions Mr. Asquith and Mr. Morley by name) were totally unaware when the Cabinet arrived at its decision that any such idea had been entertained. Mr. Balfour is incapable of making a statement which he does not believe to be true. But in this case the information on which he spoke was imperfect and inaccurate. His allegation is absolutely unfounded, and to it I give the most unqualified contradiction. Without disclosing what is confidential, I am bound to say that immediately on receipt of the despatch of May 8th, I personally communicated with Lord Elgin on this question. I frankly admit that Lord Elgin did not consider that the policy proposed in that despatch was a breach of the Proclamation, and he gave me his reasons for holding that opinion. I may add that the reasons of Lord Elgin, together with the despatch, were submitted by me to all my colleagues some days before the Cabinet was held when they arrived at their decision. Mr. Balfour talks of bandying arguments backwards and forwards between the Home Government and the Government of India, and refers to some controversy about questions of expenditure, policy, and military strategy. All this is a flight of his brilliant imagination. There was no controversy and no bandying backwards and forwards of any arguments. I asked, as I was bound to ask, the Government of India for their opinion. They gave it in the despatch which arrived at the end of May. They were anxious for our decision, and that decision was given immediately after the consideration to which I have already alluded.

The Imperial Government and the Government of India.

Mr. Balfour talks about our overruling the Government of India. This is a complete misunderstanding, not only of the constitutional position of the Government of India, but of everything that took

place between the Imperial and local Governments. The decision of this and all similar cases rests solely with the Imperial authority, and for the reasons which Lord Salisbury stated in his well-known despatch, where he laid down the sound doctrine that "the supreme authority of Parliament is the reason and the measure of the authority exercised by the home Government in Indian affairs; that so far as Parliament is concerned no responsibility of the Government of India exists; and that the only responsibility known to Parliament is that of the Ministers of the Crown." The late Government were responsible for the decision to evacuate Chitral. The present Government are responsible for the reversal of that decision. The late Government were of opinion that their decision prevented any violation of the proclamation. If they were wrong, they and they alone must submit to the censure. The present Government are of opinion that the course which they have pursued is consistent both with the letter and spirit of the proclamation; if they are wrong, they and they alone must bear the blame. To describe criticism or censure of their policy as being "not an attack upon Lord Salisbury and Lord Salisbury's Government, but a personal attack upon Lord Elgin and his council," is a flagrant contradiction of the facts of the case, and an unworthy attempt to hide the real responsibility of the Cabinet behind the great personality of the Viceroy, who preeminently deserves, in Mr. Balfour's own words, "The support, the encouragement, and the cordial admiration of every citizen of this country." If we had remained in office a few days longer it would have been my duty to have sent a despatch to India putting on permanent record all the reasons which led to and justified the decision conveyed by the telegram of June 13th, and of our opinion of the subsequent proposals made by the Government of India for carrying our policy into effect. Those reasons were, however, on the very first opportunity after the general election fully stated by the late Prime Minister and by myself in both Houses of Parliament.

The Action of the present Government.

My successor, on taking office, announced that the present Government would reconsider the Chitral question, and on August 1st he inquired as to the possibility of the arrangement with the tribes for the road. The Indian Government replied that they had avoided open negotiations with the tribes, but that the reports received by them warranted the confident expectation that peaceable arrangements could be made. They also stated that no addition to the Army was asked. Some days later Lord George Hamilton telegraphed the assent of the Government to the proposals of the despatch of May 8th, subject to the condition, among others, that there should be no increase to the Army; and he added:—"Do nothing in any way to infringe the terms of the proclamation." A full despatch followed in due course, in which the Indian Secretary stated his opinion that the reports as to the expectation that peaceable arrangement could be made as to the

road, and that the Army would not be increased, materially altered the position—that they removed the doubt which had been felt as to the opening up the road by peaceful means and maintaining it without an intolerable burden of expenditure being imposed on the Indian revenue. The removal of this doubt cleared away the main obstacle to the proposals of the despatch, and he had thereupon telegraphed their acceptance by the Government. The Indian Secretary concludes with a paragraph which, to say the least of it, throws a side light on the recent assertions that the idea of any breach of the proclamation was an after-thought which first saw the light in the autumn of 1897. I quote the words of this paragraph:—

“But your information is still incomplete as to the exact cost of the scheme, and I felt some doubts as to the absolute necessity of permanently maintaining regular troops on the Malakand Pass, and as to whether the tribes would see in this an infringement of the proclamation. I therefore added to my telegram the injunction that the arrangements for this part of the scheme should be held over, pending the receipt of fuller details of expense and a caution for strictly keeping to the conditions of the proclamation.”

This despatch had not been published when Lord Rosebery made his speech in the House of Lords. Lord Rosebery, however, stated the arguments which had influenced his Government in deciding against the military occupation of Chitral, and one of those arguments was the “breaking faith with the people among whom the campaign had taken place.” A fortnight later, when the papers had been published, a long debate took place in the House of Commons, and I then explained and defended the action of the late Government. Lord George Hamilton, in his speech, attacked what he called my indictment of the Indian Government with respect to the proclamation. In reply, I stated that, in my belief, Lord Elgin and his colleagues had no intention of violating the terms of the proclamation, that they believed that peaceable arrangements could be made for the construction of the road, and, although I did not agree with them in this opinion, I admitted that if these arrangements could be made there would be no violation of the proclamation. I added that this was a question of argument, and not one of imputation upon Lord Elgin, for whom I had the profoundest respect.

The Forward Movement—and After.

What I said then I repeat to-day, and the point at issue then was—and Sir W. Harcourt in the debate urged it with great force—Could this road be peaceably made and maintained under arrangements which had any hope of permanency? The events of the last four months have, I think, decided that question. Eventually agreements were made with some of the tribes for the construction and defence of the road by their levies, for the surrender of their rights to tolls, and for payments to the chiefs. The Queen’s speech at the commencement of the Session of 1896 declared that these agreements had been loyally carried out. In the debate on the Address Lord

George Hamilton stated that the most sanguine anticipations any one could have indulged in had been more than realised. He congratulated the Conservative party on their true political instinct when, by an overwhelming majority, they assented to this forward movement, and declared his belief that there had been no forward movement in recent years made by any Government which had been more beneficial, and which would more tend to put an end to those periodical disturbances and outbreaks of fanaticism which had previously characterised that remote corner of India. Within less than eighteen months after that rosy picture had been presented to the House of Commons, the tribes in the Swat Valley, through whose country the road had been opened, with whom one of the peaceable arrangements had been made, and to whose chiefs large subsidies had been promised and paid, commenced the recent outbreak. They attacked a fortified post on the road, and, as one report stated, "the whole valley was up." The extent and character of this attack were of such a nature that two brigades, one containing four and the other three regiments, with three mountain batteries, were sent forward to support the garrison. After five days' fighting, the force under the command of Sir Bindon Blood, about 5,000 men, completely defeated the tribes. By this victory the attack on the Malakand Fort the principal fort on the road by an army of 6,000 men was prevented. A week later several thousand men of another tribe attacked one of our forts only 15 miles from Peshawar. That attack was, after fierce fighting, brilliantly repulsed. The Government of India promptly poured troops into the district, and by the middle of August our forces had increased to about 37,000 men. At that date, according to one account, "the tribes were all up through a mountain district of 600 miles long by 200 miles broad." Then came the treacherous outbreak of the Afridis, a tribe hitherto loyal to the Government, and to whom had been intrusted for nearly 20 years the guardianship of the Khaibar Pass. In September we were attacked at Nawagai. The Khan of that tribe was the chief who "openly declared himself a friend of the Government on receipt of the proclamation." His tribe attacked our forces with 3,000 men. These tribal risings have necessitated military operations on a most gigantic scale. I understood Lord Lansdowne to say on November 9th that our forces on the frontier numbered 70,000 men—more than double the number we had engaged at Waterloo—and a larger number than have been engaged in a conflict in India before. Lord George Hamilton tells us that not even in the recollection of those who passed through the Mutiny has there ever been so spontaneous and unaccountable an outbreak. I ask myself, and I ask you—Is it absolutely unaccountable?

The Causes of the Outbreak.

The Indian Secretary is of opinion that the triple visitations of famine, plague, and earthquake, combined with the repulse of the Greek invasion of Turkey, were the main causes of this outbreak. I was not aware that the frontier had been desolated by the famine or

the plague. Mr. Balfour tells us that the chief cause was the victory of the Mohammedan Turks over the Christian Greeks. I ask whether there have been any signs of disaffection among the sixty millions of the Queen's Mohammedan subjects in India. Have any of the Mohammedan States sympathised with this alleged religious war? Her Majesty, in her gracious telegram which Lord Salisbury read at the Guildhall, expressed "the intensity of the feeling with which she had heard of the affectionate and devoted support which her Throne, her cause, and her Empire had received from the native princes and peoples of India." Among the most illustrious of those native princes are the great Mohammedan chiefs. The theory that the wild mountaineers of the north-west have embarked in a crusade to destroy British rule in India appears to me to be about as probable as that the growing dissatisfaction with the Government shown in the by-elections is owing to the muzzling of the dogs. At the time when I was considering the retention of Chitral I was officially informed that there was a certain freemasonry among the tribes on the north-west, that those who were too distant from the scene of any expedition to think of joining at once in hostilities against us began to take some interest in their fellow-tribesmen when they heard of any permanent occupations of new tracts, and that in their jealous desire to maintain their complete independence they had a common link of sympathy. It appears to me that this warning was well founded, and that it is within the range of probability that the construction of military forts and the presence of large bodies of troops in districts beyond the frontier aroused the passionate fear of annexation, which is the hereditary patriotism of the tribes. It is a significant fact that one of the tribes, in reply to Sir W. Lockhart's recent proclamation, protested against the occupation of Swat, the district through which the road runs, and declared that they would oppose further inroads. It may be that a belief that the Chitral road and its garrisons were the first steps towards the destruction of the independence of the tribes kindled the conflagration which cannot be extinguished except at the fearful sacrifices which the telegrams from India daily record.

What Next?

But when the fire has been put out, when the victory has been achieved—What next? The question, not only for the people and Government of India, but for the people, Parliament, and Government of Great Britain, is—What is to be our future policy in the north-west of India? The respective merits or demerits of Governments dwindle into insignificance when we are confronted with one of the gravest difficulties of our Indian Empire. Anglo-Indian statesmen, both civil and military, are divided as to the wisest and safest frontier policy. One section, in view of a possible invasion of India by Russia, advocate what is called "the forward policy." They maintain that our frontiers should be extended until they touch the frontiers of Russia and Afghanistan. They consider that the tribes which occupy the vast region of

mountains and deserts which lie between us and what may be called neighbouring Powers should be subjugated, and their country annexed; and thus India would secure the "scientific frontier" which would be of supreme advantage in case of any attack. The other section, who have been called the party of "masterly inactivity," maintain that every step forward weakens our defences; that our dominions are completely guarded by the mountain ranges of the Himalayas and the Hindu-kush, that we should cultivate friendly relations with the intervening tribes, and respect their independence; that to conquer and hold their territory would require a large increase of the Indian army; that the additional expenditure would be an intolerable tax on Indian resources; that our true and safe policy is to develop the trade, the agriculture, the manufactures, railways and canals, and the health and education of the people of India; and that it would be an act of supreme folly to abandon all these enterprises in order to spend vast sums on a military policy the necessity for which has been denied by many of the most eminent Viceroy, the most experienced civilians, and most illustrious soldiers, who have made and maintained our Indian Empire. Twenty years ago these conflicting policies were submitted to the test of Parliamentary discussion. The advocates of the forward policy, who were the authors of the Afghan war, defeated their opponents in the House of Commons by a majority of 101. The Opposition were not dismayed. When the time came they appealed to the final authority of the electorate, and the decision was reversed. There were no speeches in that celebrated election which dealt so powerfully and so convincingly with the dangers and folly of the forward policy in its bearing, not only on Afghanistan, but on the frontier tribes, as the speeches of the present Duke of Devonshire. He, as Secretary of State for India, in opposition to the strong opinion of the Indian Government, ordered the evacuation of Kandahar. Motions censuring his action were proposed in both Houses of Parliament. The debates were of a high order, and all the arguments for and against the forward policy were stated with consummate ability. Lord Salisbury, Lord George Hamilton, and Mr. Balfour enforced their disapproval of the evacuation of Kandahar with the same arguments and with the same prophecies with which they opposed the evacuation of Chitral. In the House of Lords the majority in favour of the forward policy was 89; in the House of Commons the majority for the policy of the Duke of Devonshire was 120. Every member of the present Cabinet except Mr. Goschen, who was abroad, voted in those divisions, and it throws some light on the reversal of the policy to evacuate Chitral when we remember that 14 of the Ministers who made that decision voted against the evacuation of Kandahar. And what has been the result of our experience since 1881? I doubt whether any responsible statesman will to-day assert that the withdrawal from Afghanistan was a mistake. On the contrary, I believe, I may say I know, that the vast preponderance of authority supports the opinion that the evacuation so bitterly opposed was a wise and judicious policy.

Two Courses.

We have now two courses open to us—one is the occupation and administration of the whole country through which we have passed in the recent expeditions, the other is that, having shown our ability to defeat all hostile attacks of the tribes, we should leave the tribes alone, maintain friendly relations with them as far as possible but avoid, not only annexation, but the appearance of annexation of their country. It has been well said that “if France had a Switzerland between her and Germany she would be safer than she is now. British India has a mightier Switzerland lying across her border.” Why should we destroy so strong a bulwark? If, as Lord George Hamilton suggests, we are to construct roads, erect forts, and hold positions in Tirah and adjoining countries, we are taking the first step which will inevitably lead to conflict, to lavish sacrifice of men and money, and finally to annexation. The attempt to open roads through these regions means a permanent military force; it means interference with the native inhabitants, punishment of offending tribes; that will be followed by further control, by punitive and probably rescuing expeditions, and in the end annexation. And at what cost and to gain what advantage to India? We have yet to deal with the cost of the present expedition. What that cost is, I do not know; but if it approaches the figures I have seen, the Indian Revenue cannot meet it, and I go further, ought not to be asked to meet it. Parliament in 1880 voted £5,000,000 towards the cost of the Afghan War. The reasons which justified that vote are more forcible to-day than they were then. To throw upon India, in addition to the enormous cost and the loss by the famine and the plague, the entire cost of the present war, would be an injustice which would rankle in every part of the Indian Empire. But I refer to the cost of the policy in the future. By whom is that to be defrayed? By the Indian taxpayer? or by the British taxpayer? Ask the present and the late Finance Ministers of India, ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I think you will be told India cannot, and Great Britain will not, undertake that terrible burden. On political, on financial, on administrative grounds, as well as upon the strategical grounds, on which I am not competent to speak, but with respect to which I know the opinions of some of the greatest soldiers in her Majesty’s forces, we oppose the policy, however disguised, which means the occupation and the annexation of the vast tracts of country now held by the tribes in the North West.

The Wisest, Safest, and Best Frontier Policy.

The frontier policy which we believe to-day to be the wisest, the safest, and the best was accurately defined by the Duke of Devonshire when, as Secretary of State for India, he said:—“We do not intend to trust to a scientific frontier. We do not intend to look only to mountain passes and strongholds, and we think that some attention should be paid to the fact that these mountain passes and strongholds

are held by men, and are inhabited by men, of whom the strongest characteristic is their deep attachment to their independence. We will try to teach them once more that we ourselves respect that independence, and that in our own interests, and for the protection of our own frontier, we will assist them to maintain that independence against any comer from whatever quarter he may come."

An Imperial Question.

I have always done my utmost to keep Indian affairs outside the range of party controversy ; I have felt it to be my duty, though at the cost of the most unscrupulous misrepresentation, to support in legislation and administration the Indian policy of the Government when I have considered it on the whole to be right. The question now before us is an Imperial question which the final authority in the Empire can alone decide. Holding, as I do, the strongest convictions with respect to the occupation of Chitral, the making of the military road, and the threatened occupation of the territories beyond the frontier, I am bound to oppose a policy which I believe to be fraught with danger to the safety and prosperity of our Indian Empire.

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